

1996

Randall Thompson's Frostiana : a choral conductor's handbook

Susan M. McArthur
San Jose State University

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RANDALL THOMPSON'S FROSTIANA: A CHORAL CONDUCTOR'S
HANDBOOK

A Thesis

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Music

San Jose State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Susan M. McArthur

May 1996

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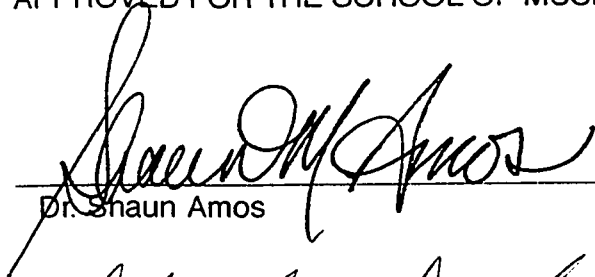
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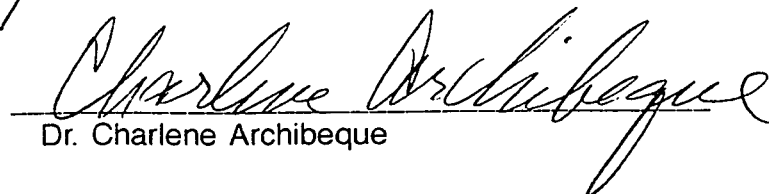
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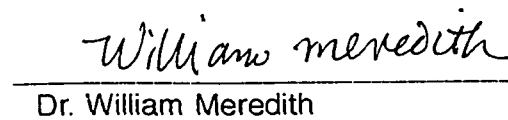
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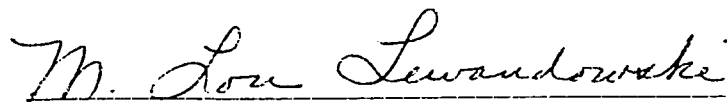


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ABSTRACT

RANDALL THOMPSON'S FROSTIANA; A CHORAL CONDUCTOR'S HANDBOOK

by Susan M. McArthur

The purpose of this thesis is to address areas that are pertinent to a conductor in the preparation and performance of Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*. These areas include text setting, performing resources, rehearsal techniques, and structural and harmonic analyses. This handbook is not intended to substitute for a conductor's own thorough score study but is intended to be a starting point and guide for further investigation.

The handbook is arranged so that each of the seven compositions that comprise *Frostiana* ("The Road Not Taken," "The Pasture," "Come In," "The Telephone," "A Girl's Garden," "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening," and "Choose Something Like A Star") has a chapter devoted to it. Also included is background information about *Frostiana*, a chapter on unity, and a Herfordian analysis.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express my appreciation to the many people whose encouragement and help brought this thesis to completion. E. C. Schirmer Music Company graciously granted permission to use examples from *Frostiana*. Dr. Meredith not only proof-read the final draft but provided many useful insights regarding the poetry of Robert Frost. Dr. Archibeque made many helpful suggestions and allowed me access to her personal library of *Frostiana* recordings. Especially, I would like to thank Dr. Shaun Amos, my advisor, who gave freely and unselfishly of his time by reading and correcting numerous "first" drafts and by providing valuable advice and counsel which are mainly responsible for this completed thesis. Finally, to Tom, my husband, who spent hours proof-reading and who without complaint supported and encouraged me in too many ways to name.

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Chapter One

Statement of Problem

Although much has been written about composers and their compositions, information concerning many choral works is conspicuously lacking, very incomplete or rather general. One such work is Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*. When faced with the task of preparing *Frostiana* for performance, a choral conductor invariably must seek answers to a variety of questions such as:

What resources are necessary for performing this work?
What is the composer expressing through this composition?
How does one rehearse *Frostiana*?
What technical, poetic, and analytical issues must be considered?
How does one ensure a successful performance?

Answers to these questions and other problems must be carefully addressed to ensure success in the performance of *Frostiana*.

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to address areas that are specifically pertinent to a conductor in the preparation and performance of Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*. This thesis will address text setting, performing resources, rehearsal techniques, and will provide structural and harmonic analyses as well. Since this composition, or selections from it, is performed often and is part of the standard choral literature, and no such performance guide exists at the present time, many conductors could benefit from this study. This handbook is not intended to substitute for a conductor's own thorough score study but is intended to be a starting point for further investigation to that study, a guide to ideas and information for the choral conductor.

Delimitations

This study will only address the seven compositions included in *Frostiana*.

Related Literature & Need for Study

At the present time there exist many articles, theses and dissertations that include information on Randall Thompson's *Frostiana*. These sources fall into three categories. Some sources deal with only one aspect of *Frostiana*, such as Jerome C. Maxwell's *An Investigation of the Musical Devices used by Randall Thompson to Compose Works on the Text of Robert Frost*. In his thesis Maxwell deals only with compositional devices used to set the text. Other sources include short references to Randall Thompson's *Frostiana* only as part of a larger study. An example of this type is *The Choral Music of Randall Thompson, An American Eclectic* by Byron McGilvray. Lastly, many sources include information about Randall Thompson's choral music but do not specifically address the pieces from *Frostiana*. These sources include *A Study of Selected Choral Works of Randall Thompson* by A. Dennis Sparger, *The Choral Music of Aaron Copland, Roy Harris and Randall Thompson* by Charles Brookhart and *Texture in the Choral Works of Selected Contemporary American Composers* by Louis Pisciotta. The author is not currently aware of any work that deals exclusively with *Frostiana* as a major choral/orchestral composition. Nor has *Frostiana* been addressed as a unified whole, exploring aspects of the individual works as they relate to each other.

Procedures

This study will be researched in the following ways.

1. All available material on Randall Thompson and *Frostiana*, including general information and material on other choral

- works, will be read.
2. All available performances, including live ones, of *Frostiana* will be listened to.
 3. Available materials on Robert Frost pertaining to the text of *Frostiana* will be read.
 4. The scores will be analyzed.
 5. The work will be rehearsed and performed.

Organization

Following an introductory chapter, there are nine additional chapters. "Chapter Two" will be an overview of *Frostiana*. Each of chapters three through nine is solely devoted to one of the seven movements which comprise *Frostiana*. "Chapter Ten" will be devoted to the subject of the unity of the seven pieces as they relate to each other. There will also be an appendix including a Herfordian analysis for each piece. Individual chapters will be organized in the following manner.

Chapter Three

"The Road Not Taken"

- I. Introduction
 - A. Text setting
 - B. Word painting
- II. Resources necessary for performance
 - A. Choral
 - B. Instrumental
- III. Analyses
 - A. Harmonic
 - B. Structural
- IV. Rehearsal Strategies
- V. Summary

Chapter Two

Overview

Randall Thompson, one of America's most notable choral composers, was born on April 21, 1899 in New York City. He spent his early life in New England and later attended Harvard, receiving both his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in music from that institution. His teachers at Harvard included Walter R. Spalding, Edward B. Hill and Archibald T. Davidson. Archibald Davidson was the director of the Harvard Glee Club and refused Thompson membership in the Glee Club upon hearing Randall's audition. However, Thompson was allowed to participate in Harvard's informal afternoon sings which Davidson also directed. Later Thompson studied with Ernest Bloch and spent time abroad in Rome and Switzerland.

While in Italy, Thompson met Gian Francesco Malipiero, an Italian composer and musicologist. Malipiero, who in 1902 had discovered and began to transcribe long forgotten early Italian music, introduced Thompson to the music of Monteverdi. About Monteverdi Thompson stated, "I often go back to him like as to a spring of pure water--like taking a swig and going to work. I suppose that he (Monteverdi) is one of the prime influences in my life." Other influences include Bach, Palestrina, Lasso, Handel, and American folk songs.

Thompson eventually became a teacher himself and taught at various places, including Wellesly College, the University of California, the Curtis Institute of Music, the University of Virginia, Princeton, Juilliard, and Harvard. His students included Leonard Bernstein, Lukas Foss and Kirke Mechem. Thompson most often taught modal counterpoint, tonal counterpoint, and choral

¹ Byron W. McGilvray, The Choral Music of Randall Thompson, An American Eclectic. Unpublished Dissertation. (Kansas City: University of Missouri, 1979), 37.

composition. Modal counterpoint was Thompson's favorite subject to teach because it is a superb vocal medium.² Thompson thought that teaching was just as important as composing and strongly believed that students should receive a strong liberal arts background in preparation for a career in music.³ He enjoyed teaching and working with young people and wrote numerous pieces that are suitable for young performers, such as "Velvet Shoes" and "My Master Hath a Garden."

Thompson's musical language is original but not experimental. His own style was formed by assimilating music from both the past and present with a craftsman's approach to the details of composition.⁴ This craftsmanship is probably due to his academic training and his practical experience as a choral conductor.⁵ Thompson considered himself a nationalistic eclectic and was opposed to unrestrained emotional expression.⁶ Thompson's compositions, like many Renaissance works, are characterized by melodic, harmonic and emotional restraint. Of his pieces Thompson states, "None of my works just splash around in emotional baths."⁷ Thompson also felt strongly that many aspiring composers sacrifice developing their own musical personal language, choosing instead misguided aspirations of greatness and uniqueness. Thompson states,

One of the worst things that ever happened to modern music was the success of the riot over the *Rite of Spring*. Because everyone thinks, "If I create a riot, I will equal Stravinsky" and they go aiming at that riot complex. If they could only get people to break the glass in Symphony Hall or

² Ibid, 46.

³ Ibid, 17.

⁴ Elliot Forbes, "The Music of Randall Thompson", The Musical Quarterly 16, no. 1 (1949): 23.

⁵ Charles Edward Brookhart, The Choral Music of Aaron Copland, Roy Harris, and Randall Thompson, Unpublished Dissertation. (George Peabody College for Teachers, 1960), 258.

⁶ Byron W. McGilvray, 63.

⁷ Ibid, 39.

Philharmonic Hall or wherever it is . . . if I could only get them to have people tearing flowers off ladies hats and throwing tomatoes . . . then I would be great.⁸

In my way of thinking, to increase complexity is not necessarily progress. I do not think the newer an art is the more complex it has to be. I could give you several quotations on this subject. I'll give you one. Shakespeare, in one of his sonnets said "All my best is making old words new."⁹

Thompson's inspiration came from reading. He was very interested in ideas and thoughts and read voraciously.¹⁰ When he read something that he thought would be suitable for setting to music, Thompson saved it for the right moment and situation. One of Thompson's most notable compositional qualities is the care and thought involved in the selection and setting of text. Thompson said,

As far as setting texts to music, I try to let the text lead me by the hand. . . by the neck, because I want there to be a wedding between the words and the music. I try to set a given line in a dozen--hundred different ways and to set forth words in the best way. I spend a great deal of time, write lots of notes, scratch paper notes and tear them up. I experiment with this, that and the other¹¹

Without exception, all of Thompson's compositional elements appear to be chosen primarily for their suitability in projecting the text. They include rhythm patterns and meters based on speech patterns, harmonies, phrasing, form, dynamics, tempo and expressive markings. Thompson strongly believed that each musical device and expression should have a purpose.¹² Because the text is all-important, Thompson does not hesitate to borrow any

⁸ Ibid, 23.

⁹ Ibid, 24.

¹⁰ Ibid, 30.

¹¹ Ibid, 31.

¹² Ibid, 24.

compositional technique that will enhance the words.¹³ The result of the care and thought Thompson puts into the selection and setting of text is that he does not rewrite. Once a composition is completed, it is left alone.¹⁴

Other than his gift for careful text setting, Thompson is also praised for his knowledge of the voice and his command of choral color. He always has the vocalist in mind and created music that is consistently singable. Thompson opposed choral works that show no feelings for singers as human beings, treating the voice as an instrument. Thompson states,

I feel and I think most of my composer colleagues would agree with me-- that for many years the art of choral composition in America has suffered greatly for want of any real widespread understanding of what a chorus can do, or what it can appropriately be asked to do. The most common defect is the too instrumental-like treatment of vocal lines. There is apt to be an immoderate range in one part, or in all parts.¹⁵

As one writer so aptly says, "Thompson approaches voices from a positive rather than a negative viewpoint, he constantly emphasizes the voice's capabilities rather than its limitations."¹⁶

Almost all of Randall Thompson's works were commissioned or written with a specific occasion or audience in mind. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Thompson did not feel that writing only for commissions or specific occasions compromised his art. He believed that every great composer worked with an audience in mind and said that,

They (the artists of the period) didn't sit and wait for inspiration. They didn't wait for an angel with a golden pen to come and dictate what they wrote, or what they painted, or the music they composed. They (the customer) gave specifications just as you'd give them to an architect when you say "I want a house with so many rooms." They used their art, and they

¹³ Ibid, 63.

¹⁴ Ibid, 32.

¹⁵ Ibid, 27.

¹⁶ Ibid, 27.

defined their art as their ability to comply with these specifications.¹⁷

One of Randall Thompson's most often sung and well known work, *Frostiana*, was commissioned by the Bicentennial Committee for the 200th anniversary of the charter of the town of Amherst, Massachusetts. The work consists of seven settings of poems by Robert Frost in which nature is either the subject matter or the controlling metaphor.¹⁸ The poems, their original sources and dates of publication are listed in example one.

Example 1

Poem	Source	Date
The Road Not Taken	<i>Mountain Interval</i>	1915
The Pasture	<i>North of Boston</i>	1914
Come In	<i>A Witness Tree</i>	1941
The Telephone	<i>Mountain Interval</i>	1916
A Girl's Garden	<i>Mountain Interval</i>	1916
Stopping by the Woods	<i>New Hampshire</i>	1923
Choose Something Like A Star	<i>Come In</i>	1943

The music for *Frostiana* was composed between June 15 and July 17, 1959 in Gstaad, Switzerland (a favorite retreat of Thompson's) and was first performed on October 18, 1959 in Amherst, Massachusetts with Robert Frost present. The idea for *Frostiana* originated from the practicalities of combining a women's and a men's choral group from two different locations into a joint group with limited rehearsal time.¹⁹ The work was originally performed with piano accompaniment, but Thompson later scored the entire work for voices and orchestra. The orchestral version of *Frostiana* was first performed by the

¹⁷ Ibid, 28.

¹⁸ Gloria Nell Lupo, Expressiveness in Musical Settings of Poems by Robert Frost, Unpublished thesis. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1963), 56.

¹⁹ Elliot Forbes, "Americana", American Choral Review 16, no. 4 (1974): 53.

Radcliffe Choral Society and the Harvard/Radcliffe orchestra in Cambridge Massachusetts on April 23, 1965. Radcliffe was an all-women's college and the members of the Harvard Glee Club were all-male. Because Thompson was a practical composer, he arranged his works in different ways by changing voicings and/or instrumentation. For example, other compositions that have two or more arrangements include *Americana*, *Alleluia*, *The Last Words of David*, and *Ode to Virginian Voyage*. Music critic Cyrus Durgin praised the premiere performance of *Frostiana* with these words:

Randall Thompson has a way of writing for chorus with a polish and subtlety I believe unequaled by any composer living today. Those gifts were again evident when Thompson conducted the first performance of his *Frostiana* at Jordan Hall on March 21. These are choral settings of seven poems by Robert Frost, which Thompson set in a lyrical manner and harmonic vocabulary not unlike Brahms. The effect was of grace which enriches without obscuring the lines of Frost.²⁰

²⁰ Cyrus W. Durgin, "Adieux, Charles Munch", *Musical America* (May 1962): 11.

Chapter Three

The Road Not Taken

Two Roads diverged in a yellow wood
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Robert Frost

Introduction

Robert Frost once stated, "Any sentence that does not give two ideas, that does not have a double meaning, fails to appeal to the imagination, and is not poetry."²¹ This statement can apply to much of Frost's poetry, including "The Road Not Taken." In this poem one meaning is serious. The other is somewhat humorous but hidden from those who are not familiar with Frost and his life. Frost delighted in dual meanings and enjoyed teasing his readers about their naivete saying, "I bet not one reader in ten knows what 'The Road Not Taken' is about."²²

²¹ Robert Frost, Robert Frost and Sidney Cox: Forty Years of Friendship (Hanover, New Hampshire: University Press of New England, 1981), 96.

²² Elaine Barry, Robert Frost, (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973), 12.

On the serious side, Frost has eloquently captured a dilemma that many people experience: a desire to do more than time allows and the difficulty in making choices. The first stanza describes a person facing two roads--two choices. Knowing that only one path may be chosen, the traveler stops to look down one path until it can no longer be followed with the eye. This describes how people try to visualize their options and the effect each will have on their life. However, at some point the future can not be predicted and a choice must be made without knowing exactly where the choice will lead. In the second stanza a decision is made to take the road that seems to be less worn although at this point in the poem the traveler is not completely sure that one road is more worn than the other. Also the choice is made without any real conviction that one road is better than the other. However, the traveler seems to want to follow the road that has been less traveled. This expresses the desire to be an individual and not to just follow the masses. Traditionally, individuality has been/is a characteristic highly valued by New Englanders. Stanza three speaks to how many people promise themselves that they will someday return to the choice that has been passed-by knowing that it is unlikely. The fourth stanza of "The Road Not taken" expresses a sense of a great amount of time gone by with the word "sigh" signifying looking back with some longing for all the unexplored roads--knowledge that certain things were "given-up" and missed in order to take the chosen path. Looking back the subject of the poem is now sure that they did indeed take the less traveled road. The realization is made that choices in life, or lack thereof, ultimately define who we are and "has made all the difference."

A personal story lies behind the creating of "The Road Not Taken". Frost

wrote the poem for a close friend, the English poet Edward Thomas, on whom the speaker in the poem is also modeled. Typically Thomas, after going on a country walk with Frost, would spend a considerable amount of time lamenting over all the wildflowers that could have been seen on some other path. With this insight "The Road Not Taken" can also be viewed as a gentle parody about a person who is more concerned about what never happened as opposed to what actually did. After receiving the poem from Frost, Thomas, who fully understood the concealed message, replied, "What are you trying to do with me?"²³ As with other musical settings of "The Road Not Taken," Thompson's composition seems to portray the more somber and evident meaning.

It has been said that musical settings of poems can be expressive in two ways: they can imitate the meaning of the words directly or by analogy (i.e., word painting) or they can interpret the substance of a poem through mood, emotion and experience.²⁴ In "The Road Not Taken," Randall Thompson uses both techniques. For example, the pulse and stepwise motion of the quarter notes suggests the steady steps of the traveler (ex. 2). The tempo, in which the quarter note equals seventy, also is suitable for a walking pace. Contours of the lines in the accompaniment are suggestive of the gentle but uneven terrain of a path in the woods. Halfway through the composition, Thompson depicts two divergent roads by arranging the vocal lines in four parts with the bass and soprano moving in contrary motion. He does this at the point at which the poem mentions, "And both that morning. . . ." (ex. 3). Another example of common word painting is the descending minor second, found in the tenor part, on the word "sigh" in measure fifty-three (ex. 4).

²³ Marsahall Mertins, Robert Frost: Life and Talks-Walking (Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1965), 135.

²⁴ Gloria Nell Lupo, 3.

Example 2. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 1 - 4.

Andante moderato ♩ = 78

pp

pp Two

pp Two

pp Two

pp Two

p Legato *pp*

Example 3. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 29 - 33.

p

same. And both that morn - ing

p

same. And both that morn - ing

p

same. And both that morn - ing

p

same. And both that morn - ing

p

cresc. *mf cresc.* *f* *pp*

Example 4. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 51- 53.

I shall be tell - ing this with a sigh

I shall be tell - ing this with a sigh

I shall be tell - ing this with a sigh

I shall be tell - ing this with a sigh

In measure sixty-eight, with a faster tempo, Thompson shifts from D minor into the brighter D major to indicate that the better path has been chosen. Tempo and key changes occur while the choir is singing the word, "difference" (ex. 5).

Example 5. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 65 - 69.

p *dim.* *poco rall.* *pp* **Poco allegretto** ♩ = 88

p all the dif - fer - rence.

p all the dif - fer - rence.

p all the dif - fer - rence.

p all the dif - fer - rence.

p *dim.* *poco rall.* *pp* **Poco allegretto** ♩ = 88

p *dim.* *poco rall.* *pp* *dolce semi - staccato*

The mood and emotion of the poem, both reflective and insightful, is also captured through the smoothness of the melodic line and the low *tessitura*, which gives the piece a dark and tranquil sound. The modal melody, which avoids half steps and skips of a third, further contributes to the meditative mood by promoting a sense of unhurried and unstructured time in which one can look back and ponder the past.

Resources

The resources needed to perform "The Road Not Taken" are SATB choir and piano. If one elects to use the orchestral arrangement, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, violins, violas, cellos, and basses are needed. The choral parts are limited in range and, other than a low D which appears in the bass line at the very end of the composition, are accessible to the average high school choir. The piano arrangement can be performed by an advanced level high school accompanist.

The orchestral version also can be performed by a high school orchestra. The woodwind parts are straightforward and uncomplicated, but two of each instrument are needed to play *divisi* sections. Because little doubling is employed, one is obligated to fill the parts to recreate the texture that Thompson intended. The string section should have at least three first violins, three second violins, three violas, four cellos, and two basses. Again, these numbers are necessary for playing *divisi* parts. As with the woodwinds, the absence of doubling in the string parts, suggests that each part is essential to obtain the orchestral color that Thompson intended for this piece.

Analysis

“The Road Not Taken” is composed in D *Aeolian* and harmonic progressions result from the movement of the vocal lines.²⁵ One of Thompson's typical and favorite devices is the use of inverted chords in parallel motion against a stepwise bass in contrary motion.²⁶ The vocal parts in measures thirty-two through thirty-four provide an excellent example of this device (ex. 6). Another favored compositional technique is linear movement by seconds and thirds (ex. 6 also ex. 1).

Example 6. “The Road Not Taken” mm. 32 - 34.

The musical score for Example 6, measures 32-34 of "The Road Not Taken", consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "And both that morn - ing e - qual - ly lay, In". The piano part features a stepwise bass line in the left hand and inverted chords in the right hand. Dynamics include *p*, *f*, *pp*, and *mp*. Vertical boxes highlight the vocal lines for the words "And", "both", and "that" across the four staves. A horizontal arrow points from the piano part to the vocal lines, indicating the relationship between the piano accompaniment and the vocal melody.

²⁵ Elliot Forbes, 9.

²⁶ Ibid, 18.

The form of "The Road Not Taken" is strophic and dictated by the structure of the poem. The work divides into four sections--one section for each of four stanzas of text.²⁷ In addition, the composition naturally divides into halves between verses two and three as Thompson has set the first two verses of the poem in unison and the rest in parts. Furthermore, the vocal parts are fully supported with accompaniment in verse one and two but, starting in verse three, there is an increasing amount of *a cappella* singing with instruments used to link together the ends and beginnings of phrases where singers need to breathe (ex. 7).

Example 7. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 36 - 38.

The musical score for Example 7 consists of five systems of staves. The first four systems are vocal parts, each with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "trod - den black. Oh, I kept the first for an - oth - er day! Yet". The fifth system is the piano accompaniment, showing chords and dynamics such as *mp*, *p*, and *mf*. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat).

With the exception of verse four, each verse is introduced with four

²⁷ See analysis in appendix.

measures of instrumental music. Thompson uses dovetailing with the interludes to obtain smoothness between the first three sections. This can be observed by studying measures fifteen through eighteen, which serve as both the end of verse one and the beginning of verse two (ex. 8). The dovetailing becomes more apparent by comparing the instrumental parts in measures fifteen through eighteen (ex. 8) and measures twenty-nine through thirty-two (ex. 3) with the first four measures of the piece (ex. 2).

Example 8. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 15 - 18.

The musical score for Example 8, "The Road Not Taken" mm. 15-18, is presented in five staves. The first four staves represent vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each vocal line begins with the word "growth." and ends with "Then". The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is indicated above the final note of each vocal line. The piano accompaniment is shown on the fifth staff, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line and chords in the right hand. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4.

Verse four is introduced with nine measures of instrumental interlude instead of four. The instrumental parts are still linking together phrases to provide continuity in the places where the singers need to breathe, but now Thompson has augmented the natural breaks in the verse. He does this by separating each line of the verse with two, three, or four beats. This compositional device draws attention to each line of the last verse²⁸ (ex. 9).

Example 9. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 52 - 55.

The musical score for Example 9, "The Road Not Taken" mm. 52-55, consists of four vocal staves and two piano staves. The vocal parts are in 4/4 time and feature the lyrics "shall be telling this with a sigh. Somewhere a - ges and". The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as "a tempo" and "pp".

The score is arranged in five systems. Each system contains a vocal staff and a piano staff. The first four systems show the vocal parts with lyrics and the piano accompaniment. The fifth system shows the piano accompaniment with dynamic markings: *a tempo*, *p*, *pp*, and *pp*.

²⁸ Maxwell, 21.

Thompson not only stretches the distance between each line, but also augments the last two lines of the verse. Verse four concludes by dovetailing into a concluding section that starts at measure sixty-eight with a faster tempo (see ex. 5). After eight measures of instrumental interlude pausing on a *fermata*, Thompson draws attention to the repetition of the last line of the poem by an *a cappella* entrance with the voices (ex.10).

Example 10. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 74 - 77.

poco rall. **Poco meno mosso del Tempo I**
pp

And that has made *pp*

And that has made *pp*

And that has made *pp*

And that has made *pp*

And that has made *pp*

p *mp* *p* **Poco meno mosso del Tempo I**
pp

The use of contrasting vocal textures in this composition is related to significant structural occurrences proceeding from simple to more complex textures.²⁹ As mentioned before, the first two verses of “The Road Not Taken” are in unison. The third and fourth verse are arranged in four parts with the thickest texture appearing at climaxes and closing sections³⁰ (ex. 11 also ex. 5).

Example 11. “The Road Not Taken” mm. 79-82.

The musical score for Example 11, "The Road Not Taken" mm. 79-82, consists of five staves. The first four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and the fifth staff is piano accompaniment. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. It begins with a *rall.* marking and a *pp* dynamic. A *Tempo I* marking appears above the first vocal staff. The lyrics "dif - fer - ence." are written under the vocal lines. The score includes various performance instructions such as *rall.*, *pp*, and *(rall.)*. The piano accompaniment features a *pp* dynamic and a *Tempo I* marking, with a *(rall.) mp dim.* marking at the end of the piece.

²⁹ Louis Vincent Pisciotta, Texture in the Choral Works of Selected Contemporary American Composers, Unpublished dissertation. (Indiana: Indiana University, 1967), 360.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 350.

A more exhaustive analysis of "The Road Not Taken" can be found in appendix A.

Rehearsal Strategies

There are several aspects about "The Road Not Taken" that may require extra attention from the conductor. The first two unison verses, for example, need careful blend and articulation. Poor blend usually results from a lack of uniform vowel formation within the choir. The use of tone syllables and/or IPA translations can help the ensemble form vowels in a uniform manner. Careful placement of consonants also needs to be observed especially with notes that are either longer or shorter than a quarter note. Occasionally, it may be necessary to interpolate rests where breaths must occur (ex. 12 & 13).

Example 12. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 4-6, as written.

Two roads di-verg'd in a yel-low wood and

Example 13. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 4-6, rest interpolated.

Two roads di-verg'd in a yel-low wood And

Another challenge for choirs is finding beginning pitches on some of the entrances. The first place this is likely to be a problem is at the beginning of the third verse, which is the first place sung in parts (ex. 14).

Example 14. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 29-33.

The musical score for Example 14, "The Road Not Taken" mm. 29-33, is presented in five systems. The first four systems are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) with lyrics "same." and "And both that morn - ing". The fifth system is the piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *p*, *cresc.*, *mf cresc.*, *f*, *p*, and *pp*.

One way to practice this entrance is to have the choir sing measure thirty-nine and then enter and hold the chord on the word "And." As soon as the choir sings the chord, the accompanist should roll the chord slowly from the bass up to the soprano. If the choir is still unable to locate their pitches after two or three attempts, each part can repeat this drill alone. Similar entrances that are likely to be problematic are the beginning of the fourth verse and the coda. Both are excellent opportunities to train the choir in finding roots, thirds, and fifths of a chord (ex. 10 & 15).

Example 15. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 49 - 51.

The musical score for Example 15, "The Road Not Taken" mm. 49-51, is presented in six staves. The top five staves represent vocal parts, and the bottom two represent piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo marking *(poco rall.)* is placed above the first five staves. The dynamic markings are *pp* (pianissimo) for the vocal parts and *ff* (fortissimo) for the piano accompaniment in measure 49, transitioning to *p* (piano) in measure 51. The piano accompaniment features a "roll" technique in measure 51, indicated by a vertical line and the *pp* marking.

This technique is also effective in helping the choir find their pitches after they have had one measure of rest as in measures fifty-three through fifty-five. In this case the choir could start from the words, "this with a sigh" and then hold on the syllable "Some - ." Again the rehearsal accompanist should roll the chord from the bottom up after the choir has sung the chord but while they are still holding the pitches. The astute director will also point out that the notes on the syllable "Some - ." are the same as on the word "this" (see ex. 9).

Crossed voices, which are found in measures forty through forty-two, can also be troublesome to beginning singers who are generally used to hearing the alto line higher than the tenor. This difficulty can be addressed much in the same manner as the entrances mentioned above--by pausing on each problem spot (ex. 16). The alto and tenor parts should not be switched with each other to avoid crossed voicings because Thompson uses this device to produce a certain choral color or to make the lines more singable. Crossed voices is a common characteristic of Thompson's style.³¹

Example 16. "The Road Not Taken" mm. 40-42.

The image shows a musical score for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "On to way, I doubt - ed if I should ev - er come". The score includes dynamic markings *mp* and *p*. The piano part features a crescendo from *mp* to *p* in measures 40-42. The vocal parts show some crossed voicings, particularly in the Alto and Tenor parts, which are highlighted with boxes in the original image.

Another area of concern is that the choir's pitch might sag during the

³¹ Brookhart, 271.

a cappella sections and subsequently be out of tune with the accompaniment when it returns. Singing the descending half steps too widely is one likely cause of this. Choir members need to be aware of half-steps. Particular attention needs to be given to the bass line which, if sung inaccurately, will result in the pitch sagging in the entire choir.

Thompson was known for always giving careful attention to every detail of a composition.³² Performance success in part will depend on how carefully the director follows Thompson's explicit directions for interpretation. Some examples of Thompson's careful instructions are his tempo indications (exs. 2 & 5), precise releases for the choir (ex. 5, last measure, first beat), and numerous other score markings (exs 3, 5, 6, 7, 10 & 11).

Summary

"The Road Not Taken" is a well crafted composition. Randall Thompson, by successfully setting the text by both analogy and interpretation, has created a miniature choral masterpiece. Part of the ingenuity of the piece is its flexibility: it is performable by choirs of varying abilities such as high school groups or college ensembles; it can be accompanied by piano alone or with full orchestration; it can be performed alone or with the other six pieces in the set as a major work. In addition, Thompson has created a work of depth and substance which has immediate appeal for the conductor, choir and audience. "The Road Not Taken" is a composition worthy of the time required to rehearse and perform it and is deservedly a part of the great body of standard choral literature.

³² Jerome C. Maxwell, An Investigation of the Musical Devices Used By Randall Thompson To Compose Works on the Text of Robert Frost, Unpublished Thesis. (Ohio State University, 1966), 65.

Chapter Four

The Pasture

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring;
I'll only stop to rake the leaves away
(And wait to watch the water clear, I may):
I sha'n't be gone long.--You come too.

I'm going out to fetch the little calf
That's standing by the mother. It's so young
It totters when she licks it with her tongue.
I sha'n't be gone long.--You come too

Robert Frost

Introduction

"The Pasture," as is clear in its title, depicts a pastoral scene and describes someone who is setting out to do ordinary country tasks. The text and the music lead the listener to believe that these tasks are not mere chores, but are instead welcome experiences of life. In fact, the listener is invited to join the narrator as he embarks on his work with the words, "I sha'n't be gone long.--You come too." Relatively short but filled with significance, the poem consists of only two verses with four lines each and is set musically by Thompson in a syllabic style.

The background and circumstance surrounding the poem "The Pasture" is enlightening as to its original purpose and needs to be known to fully appreciate it. The poem was originally crafted as a peace offering for Frost's wife Elinor after a dispute. As such, "The Pasture" is a love offering. It suggests a need and desire to make space and time for another person. The poem also suggests the privileged inclusion of intimacy. Later, in 1931, Frost moved "The Pasture" from its original position in *North of Boston* and placed it as the introductory poem for the volume of his collected works. With this move, the

reader is offered an invitation into Frost's world of verse. In following years, "The Pasture" appeared in front of every volume of his collected verses. Significantly, the beginning of *In The Clearing*, Frost's last volume of poetry, begins with a single line from "The Pasture"--"And wait to watch the water clear, I may." This line symbolizes "clarification" and was a lifelong goal for Frost. Furthermore, "The Pasture" is also important because it illuminates domesticity, both agrarian and human, which is an important recurring theme in much of Frost's poetry. Frost lived much of his life as a farm worker and owner maintaining a strong preference for "country life" as opposed to "city life". "The Pasture" has become one of the more important and well known Frost poems--almost to the point of symbolizing the origin of poetry itself.

Thompson begins his musical setting of "The Pasture" by placing the instrumental introduction, marked *Lento pastorale*, in the time signature of 6/8. The music is suggestive of gentle rolling hills and the uneven terrain of quiet country meadows (ex. 17). The word *pastorale* denotes a composition evoking rustic or country life. Notable examples of this genre include the last

Example 17. "The Pasture" mm. 1 - 5

The musical score for Example 17, "The Pasture" mm. 1-5, is presented in a standard musical notation format. It consists of four staves. The top two staves are for the vocal line, and the bottom two are for the piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked "Lento pastorale" with a metronome marking of 68. The time signature is 6/8. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The piano introduction begins with a *pp* (pianissimo) dynamic marking. The score shows the first five measures of the piece, with some notes circled in the piano accompaniment.

movement of Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*, Bach's *Pastorale* for organ, and the *Sinfonia pastorale* in Handel's *Messiah*. All instrumental interludes in Thompson's "The Pasture" return with this *pastorale* material. In contrast, the text is always set in 4/4 time signature which reflects the human element and is suggestive of someone walking (ex. 18).

Example 18. "The Pasture" mm. 9 - 11.

pp molto legato

I'm go - ing out to clean the pas-ture spring; I'll

pp molto legato

I'm go - ing out to clean the pas-ture spring; I'll

pp molto legato

I'm go - ing out to clean the pas-ture spring; I'll

pp

During the text, the "walking" rhythmic drive is absent only when the words "You come too" are sung. This is done to emphasize the appeal for company and the need to share everyday existence with another human being (ex. 19).

Another example of word painting can be found in measure thirty-two where Thompson uses sixteenth notes on the word "totters"³³ (ex. 20).

³³ Lupo, 11.

Example 19. "The Pasture" mm.18 - 20.

divisi pp dolce
 You come too.
pp dolce
 You come too.
pp dolce
 You come too.
pp

Example 20. "The Pasture" m. 32.

poco cresc. staccato *legato*
 young it tot - ters when she licks it with her
poco cresc. staccato *legato*
 young it tot - ters when she licks it with her
poco cresc. staccato *legato*
 young it tot - ters when she licks it with her

Musically, as with all the pieces included in *Frostiana*, Thompson has successfully captured the mood and meaning of the poem "The Pasture".

Resources

Thompson wrote "The Pasture" for men's voices (TBB) with piano or orchestra. The vocal ranges are moderate and are normally accessible to high school singers (ex. 21). However, "The Pasture" is best suited for male vocalists who have had at least some previous choral training in part singing.

Example 21. "The Pasture" - vocal ranges.



Both the piano and orchestral arrangements are very accessible for high school instrumentalists. If an orchestra is used, it requires two clarinets and strings. The orchestra does not play *divisi* in any of the parts and, depending on the size of choral group, could be covered by a chamber orchestra or string quintet with one instrumentalist on a part.

Analysis

"The Pasture" is in F major with inflections of modality due to a prevalent use of the pentatonic scale built on F, avoidance of strong cadences on F, use of parallel chordal structures, and avoidance of the leading tone. These compositional techniques suit well the pastoral subject of the text.

The form of "The Pasture" is strophic with each of the two verses and coda preceded by nine measures of instrumental introduction. Each group of nine measures is similar, which gives the composition a feeling of unity. However, Thompson varies each interlude so that there is variety. He applies the same technique to both of the sung verses. As in "The Road Not Taken," Thompson uses dovetailing in "The Pasture" to connect the ends of the verses with the beginnings of each instrumental interlude. The overlap occurs on the word "too" and is two measures in length (compare exs. 17 & 19).

The four measure coda repeats the last three words of each verse, "You come too," and is both an augmentation and ornamented version of those words. The word "you," for example, is lengthened from two beats to three and "come" now appears as a half note instead of a quarter note. "Too" is now sung using upper and lower neighboring tones to conclude the composition (compare exs. 22 & 23).

The texture, as is typical of Thompson, is thicker at the end of both verses, at the coda, and on the words, "You come too." At these places Thompson divides the tenor line into two parts resulting in a four part vocal texture. These are the only measures that employ four parts (see exs. 22 & 23).

Example 22. "The Pasture" mm. 18 - 20 & 36 - 38, verses one & two.

divisi pp dolce
 You come too.

pp dolce
 You come too.

pp dolce
 You come too.

Example 23. "The Pasture" mm. 46 - 49, coda.

too.

You come too.

The instrumental accompaniment does not function solely as support for the voices, but rather as an equally important voice in the composition. As in "The Road Not Taken", Thompson sometimes uses the accompaniment to smoothly link lines of the verse together. An example of this can be located in measure thirteen (ex. 24). Other times, the accompaniment acts as added punctuation at the crest of each phrase (ex. 25). Significant rests also provide punctuation and are inherent in the poetry itself.

Example 24. "The Pasture" mm. 13 - 16.

way (And wait to watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't be gone long I sha'n'be

way (And wait to watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't begone long I sha'n'be

way (And watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n'tbe gone long I sha'n'be

pp *Poco cresc.* *mp* *mf dim.* *mp* *p*

Example 25. "The Pasture" mm. 15 - 17.

may): I shant be gone long, I shant be gone long.

may): I shant be gone long, I shant be gone long.

may): I shant be gone long, I shant be gone long.

mp *mf dim.* *mp* *p*

mp *mf dim.* *mp* *p*

mp *mf dim.* *mp* *p*

Rehearsal Strategies

Although very straightforward, there are several aspects of “The Pasture” that may need extra attention. One of these is the first entrance of the choir at measure ten. Some singers may have difficulty finding their starting pitches. They may also experience trouble with the meter change.

Finding the pitch can be addressed by starting in measure seven and then holding the first note on the word “I’m.” Often it helps to point out that the outer voices are singing the exact same pitch and the middle voice is singing above the other two. Furthermore the “F” in the two outer parts is sounded beforehand in the accompaniment. If the singers are familiar with *solfeggio*, it is often enlightening to point out that the outer two voices enter on “do” and the inner voice on “mi” (ex. 26).

Example 26. “The Pasture” mm. 9 - 11.

The musical score for Example 26, "The Pasture" measures 9-11, is presented in four systems. The first three systems are vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass) and the fourth system is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major/D minor) and the time signature is 6/8. The tempo and dynamics markings are *pp* and *molto legato*.

The lyrics for all vocal parts are: "I'm go - ing out to clean the pas - ture spring; I'll".

The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A box highlights the first measure of the piano part in measure 9, and lines connect this box to the first notes of the vocal parts in measure 10, illustrating the pitch relationship.

Another place that may need extra practice is the entrance of the voices at the coda in measure forty-six. Generally, the singers will not encounter difficulty with entrances that occur after only a few beats of silence but the same techniques mentioned above may help if they do (see ex. 23).

If the meter change is awkward, a demonstration by the conductor singing one of the parts and directing at the same time should resolve the confusion. Often, the singers need to hear, see, and feel the meter change. Because the choristers need to hear the change in meter, play about three measures of accompaniment prior to the entrance when demonstrating or rehearsing. In addition, the choir members need to be looking at the director and not at their scores to see the relationship between beat patterns and the words they are singing. Finally, singers will benefit from both clapping or tapping eighth notes and/or conducting themselves while they sing this entrance.

Another aspect of "The Pasture" that can be problematic involves intonation. The pitch of the choir may sag in measures ten, twelve and in similar *a cappella* places (ex. 27). If this happens check the descending leaps, such as occur in the lower two voices on the words "to rake" and on the words "only stop" in the tenor. Next, analyze all half steps to ensure that those which ascend are being sung wide enough. Sometimes it will assist the choir by pointing out that all ascending intervals need to be sung widely and all descending intervals narrowly. Furthermore, it is often helpful to check each part separately, as often it is only one part that is allowing the pitch to sag. The bass part is critical in this regard. If the bass part is sung out of tune the other two parts will also be out of tune. Sometimes, the basses will need to sing with a more focused, brighter tone to improve sagging pitch.

Example 27. "The Pasture" mm. 10 - 12.

The musical score consists of four systems. The first three systems are vocal staves with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: "I'm go-ing out to clean the pasture spring; I'll on-ly stop to rake the leaves a". The first system is Soprano, the second is Alto, and the third is Bass. The fourth system shows the piano accompaniment for the same measures, with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a brace on the left. The piano part consists of a simple harmonic accompaniment.

Another place that is frequently sung inaccurately is found in measures fifteen and sixteen in the middle voice where the singers are required to sing a B natural (ex. 28). The tendency is for the singers to either sing a B flat or to imprecisely sing somewhere in between the B natural and B flat. Pointing out that the B natural needs to be sung very "high" will help improve intonation here. Another possibility is to brighten the vowel on the words "may" and "gone." Also, it is instructive to have the ensemble listen to the accompaniment from measure thirteen through measure sixteen.

Example 28. "The Pasture" mm. 13 - 16.

way (And wait to watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't be gone long I sha'n't be

way (And wait to watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't be gone long I sha'n't be

way (And watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't be gone long I sha'n't be

pp Poco cresc. mp mf dim. mp p

Another place that can be confusing to some choral singers is measure eleven where the half note on the word "spring" needs to be modified to a dotted quarter and eighth rest so that the singers can breath (compare exs. 29 & 30). The same modification may also be made on the word "calf" at measure twenty-nine.

Example 29. "The Pasture" mm. 9 - 11 as written.

I'm go-ing out to clean the pas - ture spring; I'll

Example 30. "The Pasture" mm. 9 - 11 modified.

I'm go-ing out to clean the pas - ture spring; I'll

A similar occurrence appears in measures fifteen and thirty-three. The singers will likely need a breath between the words "may and I" and "tongue and I." In measure fifteen care needs to be taken that the choir cuts-off on "may" and enters on "I" together. The conductor will need to show a breath between those two words. Because the tempo is relatively slow, the last eighth-note on the word "may" can be changed to a sixteenth-note followed by a sixteenth-rest on which the singers will take a slight "catch" breath (compare exs. 31 & 32).

Example 31. "The Pasture" mm. 13 - 16 as written.

Example 31 shows the original musical score for measures 13-16 of "The Pasture". It features three vocal parts: Soprano (top), Alto (middle), and Bass (bottom). The lyrics are: "way (And wait to watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't be gone long I sha'n'be". The score includes dynamic markings: *Poco cresc.* for the first part, and *mp*, *mf dim.*, *mp*, and *p* for the second part. A box highlights the transition from "may" to "I" in all parts.

Example 32. "The Pasture". mm. 13 - 16 modified.

Example 32 shows the modified musical score for measures 13-16 of "The Pasture". It features three vocal parts: Soprano (top), Alto (middle), and Bass (bottom). The lyrics are: "way (And watch the wa-ter clear I may): I sha'n't be gone long I sha'n'be". The score includes dynamic markings: *Poco cresc.* for the first part, and *mp*, *mf dim.*, *mp*, and *p* for the second part. A box highlights the transition from "may" to "I" in all parts.

Measure thirty-three needs to be treated differently due to the difference in rhythm between the upper and lower two parts. The tenor line needs to be modified from a half note tied to an eighth on the word "tongue" to a half note followed by an eighth-rest. The lower two parts require that the quarter note on beat three be transformed into an eighth-note and eighth-rest (exs. 33 & 34).

Example 33. "The Pasture" mm. 33 - 35 as written.

Example 33 shows the original musical notation for measures 33-35. The score consists of three staves: Treble, Bass, and Bass. The lyrics are "tongue. I sha'n't be gone long." The original notation includes dynamic markings (*mp*, *mf*, *mf dim.*, *p*) and performance instructions such as "long." and "p" with accents. The Tenor line (Bass staff) has a half note tied to an eighth note on the word "tongue".

Example 34. "The Pasture" mm. 33 - 35 modified.

Example 34 shows the modified musical notation for measures 33-35. The score consists of three staves: Treble, Bass, and Bass. The lyrics are "tongue. I sha'n't be gone long." The modified notation includes dynamic markings (*mp*, *mf*, *mf dim.*, *p*) and performance instructions such as "long." and "p" with accents. The Tenor line (Bass staff) is modified to have a half note followed by an eighth rest on the word "tongue".

Because the verses are set similarly to each other, singers may experience difficulty with the differences which exist between the two. Examining and comparing the parts of each verse for repetition and differences will enable the members of the ensemble to perform both verses correctly and with understanding. To illustrate, the singers need to recognize that the first two measures of both verses are identical with the exception of text. However, in the third measure of the second verse, the original melodic idea remains intact while the rhythm is considerably altered (exs. 35 & 36).

Example 35. "The Pasture" mm. 10 - 12, verse one.

I'm go - ing out to clean the pas - ture spring; I'll on - ly stop to rake the leaves a

I'm go ing out to clean the pas - ture spring; I'll on - ly stop to rake the leaves a

I'm go - ing out to clean the pas - ture spring; I'll on - ly stop to rake the leaves a

Example 36. "The Pasture" mm. 28 - 30, verse two.

I'm go - ing out to fetch the lit - tle calf That's stand - ing by the

I'm go ing out to fetch the lit - tle calf That's stand - ing by the

I'm go - ing out to fetch the lit - tle calf That's stand ing by - the

Speaking the words in rhythm for both verses will help clarify the differences between the two verses.

The musical setting of the text "I sha'n't be gone long" is significantly different in each verse. Practicing measures fifteen through seventeen and then immediately singing measures thirty-three through thirty-five will help the singers remember the differences between the two (exs. 37 & 38).

Example 37. "The Pasture" mm. 15 - 17, verse one.

Example 37 shows three systems of musical notation for measures 15-17, verse one. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are: "may): I shant be gone long, I shant be gone long." The dynamics are marked as *mp*, *mf*, *dim.*, *mp*, and *p*. There are slurs and accents over the notes.

Example 38. "The Pasture" mm. 33 -35, verse two.

Example 38 shows two systems of musical notation for measures 33-35, verse two. Each system consists of a vocal line (treble clef) and a bass line (bass clef). The lyrics are: "tongue. I sha'n't be gone long." The dynamics are marked as *mp*, *mf*, *dim.*, *mp*, and *p*. There are slurs and accents over the notes.

Summary

"The Pasture" is yet another example of the great care with which Randall Thompson approached his craft of composition. Even though the entire piece consists of only forty-nine measures, "The Pasture" embodies the elements that make a composition a lasting work of art. As Maxwell aptly states, "The work assumes the properties of an art song in that the accompaniment, the voice, the poem are of equal importance and are given equal attention."³⁴ Like "The Road Not Taken," "The Pasture" is a piece of music that can be successfully performed under a variety of situations and will likely endure as a standard part of choral literature.

³⁴ Maxwell, 29.

Chapter Five

Come In

As I came to the edge of the woods,
Thrush music--hark!
Now if it was dusk outside,
Inside it was dark.

Too dark in the woods for a bird
By sleight of wing
To better its perch for the night,
Though it still could sing.

The last of the light of the sun
That had died in the west
Still lived for one song more
In a thrush's breast.

Far in the pillared dark
Thrush music went--
Almost like a call to come in
To the dark and lament.

But no, I was out for stars:
I would not come in.
I meant not even if asked,
And I hadn't been.

Robert Frost

Introduction

"Come In" paints an image of a person standing alone at the edge of a very dark wood. As the sun sets, a thrush from deep inside the woods sings its songs which sound, "Almost like a call to come in, To the dark and lament." The narrator's answer is, "But no, I was out for stars: I would not come in. I meant not even if asked, And I hadn't been." This poem deals with one of Robert Frost's favorite subjects--oblivion and dark mysteries. It also, like "The Road Not Taken," is a poem about making choices. The choice is is to go into the dark woods where even the thrush can not see well enough to "better its perch

for the night " or to stay where the light from the stars can be seen. The word "dusk" in the first stanza is an important one and represents a transitional state between light and dark. Late dusk allows starlight to be revealed, but at the same time provides a margin of comfort for man who is unable to see in the dark. Also, the woods in this poem are not only dark but convey a feeling of being oppressive. Frost creates this impression by using such words as "pillared" which are not only associated with massively overwhelming tall trees, but also with buildings that make use of pillars--such as temples. Furthermore, the thrush in this poem sings a song which encourages the person to "come in to the dark and lament." The word "lament" is usually associated with negative or sorrowful situations such as death and funerals. Unlike Frost's use of the bird figure in "Come In," in much other poetry birds signify pleasant feelings such as joy and happiness. "Come In" is a siren song symbolizing an attraction to the dark and the pull of lonely places. Even the title of the poem, "Come In" is a strong enticement to draw the person into the dark. However, the speaker in the poem is in control of temptation and rejects the call. The line "But no, I was out for stars" is an important one. As Lynen writes, "In Frost's mind stars are habitually associated with ideas of astrological influence and an almost Platonic conception of the true, the good, and the beautiful seen as a unity."³⁵ After receiving a telescope in 1890 Frost became very fascinated with astronomy. According to Hall, "Literally and figuratively, Frost was always 'out for stars'."³⁶ "Come In" can be viewed as a triumph for the human soul in choosing enlightenment over darkness.

As is usual for Thompson, he takes advantage of every opportunity to use

³⁵ John F. Lynen, The Pastoral Art of Robert Frost (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1960), 71.

³⁶ Dorothy J. Hall, Robert Frost: Contours of Belief (Ohio University Press, 1984), 119.

word painting and has set the text with careful consideration for natural speech inflection. Thompson begins "Come In" by imitating the thrush's call in the accompaniment (ex. 39). The "thrush figure" is played in the piano's upper register or by a flute in the orchestral arrangement.

Example 39. "Come In" mm. 1 - 5.

The musical score for Example 39, "Come In" mm. 1-5, is presented in two systems. The first system (mm. 1-3) is marked *Lento* and *pp*. It features a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody in the upper register of the piano consists of a series of eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the third measure. The second system (mm. 4-5) is marked *leggero* and *pp*. It also features a treble clef and a common time signature. The melody in the upper register of the piano consists of a series of eighth notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in the fifth measure. The score includes various articulations such as slurs and accents, and a dynamic marking of *pp* (pianissimo) throughout.

These "bird calls" appear at every instrumental interlude with subtle variations much in the same way a real thrush would vary its call. They also appear during the last two verses of the composition. To illustrate, during verse four Thompson has used a variation of the "thrush figure" to word paint on the text, "Far in the pillar'd dark Thrush music went" (ex. 40). In addition, fragments of the figure appear during the last two lines of the poem (every other measure) as single "chirps" (ex. 41). "Come In" concludes as it began with the sounds of the thrush.

Example 40. "Come In" mm. 49 - 52.

f > *meno f*

Far in the pil-lar'd dark Thrush mus-ic went.

f > *meno f*

Far in the pil-lar'd dark Thrush mus-ic went.

f > *meno f*

Far in the pil-lar'd dark Thrush mus-ic went.

Bx

Example 41. "Come In" mm. 61 - 68.

p
I meant not ev - en if ask'd,
p
I meant not ev - en if ask'd,
p
I meant not ev - en if ask'd,

mp
p
Ped * Ped 8^{va} 8^{va} *

pp
And I had-n't been
pp
And I had-n't been
pp
And I had-n't been

p
pp
Ped * Ped *

Word painting also occurs at measure fifty-five where descending minor seconds are used in a sigh motive on the word "lament" (ex. 42).

Example 42. "Come In" m. 55.

Thompson also cleverly sets the word "dark" three times. He does this by approaching the word with descending melodic patterns at measures fourteen and fifty (exs. 43 & 44) and by ingeniously placing the melody in the second alto part at measure twenty (ex. 45).

Example 43. "Come In" mm. 13 -14.

Example 44. "Come In" m. 49 - 50.

Far in the pil - lar'd dark

Far in the pil - lar'd dark

Far in the pil - lar'd dark

Example 45. "Come In" mm. 20 - 22.

Too dark for a bird By sleight of

Too dark for a bird By sleight of

Too dark in the wood for a bird By sleight of

In addition to word painting, the relatively low tessituras indicated by the voicings SAA, meter and tempo all contribute to the meaning of the text. As before, Thompson has set the poem with careful regard to normal speech inflections and rhythms. Various compositional devices such as articulations, rests, and subdivisions of the beat are used to obtain natural speech-like characteristics. An excellent example is located in measures nine and ten. Thompson uses two different articulation markings on the words "Thrush" and

“hark!” to reflect the differences in the way each word is spoken. “Thrush” normally would be spoken a little longer and softer because of the “sh” at the end while the word “hark!” ends crisply with a hard “K.” These two measures are also a wonderful example of Thompson’s use of rests in text setting and word painting. For example, the three beats of silence, in the vocal parts, after the word “hark” reflects the intent of that word to “stop and listen.” Furthermore, the use of subdivisions of the beat is exemplified by the word “music” in measure nine where Thompson has properly placed accented and unaccented syllables on strong and weak parts of the beat respectively (ex. 46).

Example 46. “Come In” mm. 9 - 10.

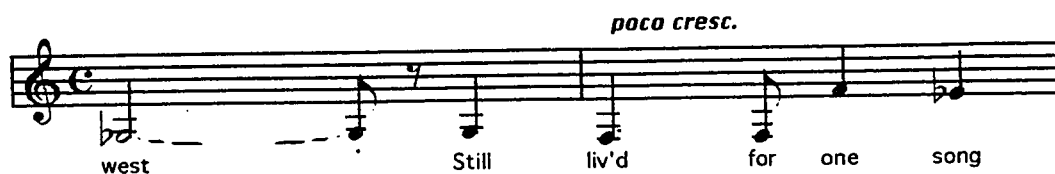
The image shows three staves of musical notation for a three-part women's chorus (SAA). The music is in 3/4 time and features a key signature of one flat. The lyrics are "Thrush", "mu - sic", and "hark!". The first staff begins with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a box containing a dash (-). The second staff begins with *mp* and a box containing a dot (·). The third staff begins with *mp* and a box containing a dash (-). The music transitions from *mp* to *p* and then to *dolcissimo*. There are rests in the vocal parts after the word "hark!".

Resources

Thompson composed “Come In” for a three part women’s chorus (SAA) and piano or orchestra. The vocal ranges are moderate for the most part with occasional low F’s in the second alto part (ex. 47). Depending on the maturity and age of the singers, the overall low tessitura of the second alto part (including the low F’s) may be troublesome. Many high school aged young

women may not be able to produce a low F or may do so only with inappropriate vocal production. This is an important consideration because the second alto part is critical for giving "Come In" the tone color that Thompson prescribes. Performance success of this piece to some extent depends on the quality of the alto sound the chorus is able to obtain. Also, "Come In" requires a choral group in which all three parts have considerable control over their vocal production, such as use of the breath, dynamics, and articulations.

Example 47. "Come In" mm. 38 - 39.



The piano arrangement demands a high degree of technique and musicality from the pianist and requires a professional or advanced level performer. Without care, some parts of the piano arrangement are at risk of sounding awkward. These passages, deceptively simple, require great finesse. Other places require fast passage work and accurate rhythm. For examples, refer to examples thirty-nine through forty-two.

The orchestral arrangement is scored for strings and solo flute. The strings include first violins, second violins, violas, cellos, and contrabasses. Due to *divisi* parts, the strings need a minimum of thirteen performers with three first violins, three second violins, three violas, two cellos, and two contrabasses. The string parts should not pose a problem for the average high school orchestra, with the exception of measures forty-nine through fifty-two which is a high *divisi* first violin part (ex. 48).

Example 48. "Come In" mm. 49-52.

Other places that might require some extra attention are measures where accidentals/chromatics occur such as are found in measures thirty-seven through forty (ex. 49).

Example 49. "Come In" mm. 37 - 40.

Analysis

Although Thompson has used the mode of G *Aeolian* to compose "Come In," the harmonies employed result from voice leading and are often

series of parallel inverted major or minor chords (ex. 50).

Example 50. "Come In" mm. 6-8.

The musical score for Example 50, "Come In" mm. 6-8, is presented in five staves. The top four staves are vocal lines, and the bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The music is in 3/4 time and B-flat major. The lyrics are "As I came to the edge of the woods," repeated on each vocal line. The piano accompaniment features a series of parallel inverted major and minor chords, as mentioned in the text.

Even though most of the chords are major and minor triads, Thompson does use seventh and even ninth chords. They are particularly frequent beginning at measure fifty-four continuing through fifty-nine where he utilizes major and minor seventh chords and an occasional ninth chord (ex. 51). Thompson's avoidance of dominant seventh chords is notable. These factors all result in an original harmonic language that is entirely Thompson's.

The structure of "Come In" is as follows: Verses one through three are nine measures, each preceded by five measures of instrumental music. Verses four and five are treated as if they were one with no instrumental interlude separating them. Thompson is able to obtain a symmetrical structural

Example 51. "Come In" mm. 54 - 59.

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system (mm. 54-59) features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in a minor key and contain the lyrics: "in To the dark and la-ment. But". The piano accompaniment includes a *cresc.* marking and dynamic markings of *f*. The second system (mm. 60-63) features three vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal lines contain the lyrics: "no, I was out for stars: I would not come". The piano accompaniment includes a *meno f* marking. Chord diagrams are provided below the piano parts for both systems.

Chord Diagrams for System 1 (mm. 54-59):

- Measures 54-55: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ **G7**
- Measures 56-57: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **BbM7**
- Measures 58-59: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **DbM7**
- Measures 60-61: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **Em7**
- Measures 62-63: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **Ebm/M**

Chord Diagrams for System 2 (mm. 60-63):

- Measures 60-61: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **AbM7**
- Measures 62-63: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **Gm7** $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **Fm9** $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **EM7**
- Measures 64-65: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **DbM7**
- Measures 66-67: $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **Cm7** $\text{P} \text{E} \text{A}$ * **Bb9**

relationship between verse four and five by using augmentations on key words and by using rests in the vocal parts in the fifth verse. These augmentations occur in measures sixty-three and sixty-seven on the words "ask'd" and "been" respectively. Vocal parts are conspicuously absent in measures sixty-four through sixty-six (ex. 52). "Come In" ends with ten measures of instrumental conclusion. Although through-composed, the underlying structure of "Come In" creates, along with the previously mentioned "thrush" interludes, great unity.

Another unifying device is the similarity between the openings of verse one, two, three and five. These verses all use similar or identical pitch and rhythm patterns. These patterns sometimes appear in the same voice but also

Example 52. "Come In" mm. 61 - 68.

The musical score for Example 52, "Come In" measures 61-68, is presented in four systems. The first three systems show vocal parts in treble clef with lyrics: "I meant not ev - en if ask'd,". Each vocal line begins with a dynamic marking of *p*. The fourth system shows the instrumental accompaniment in bass clef, starting with a dynamic marking of *mp* and a crescendo hairpin. The score includes various musical notations such as rests, slurs, and dynamic markings. At the bottom of the score, there are handwritten annotations: "Ped" under the first measure, an asterisk under the second measure, "Ped" under the fifth measure, "8va" under the sixth measure, and "8va" with an asterisk under the eighth measure.

Example 52 continued

The image displays a musical score for Example 52 continued. It consists of four staves. The top three staves are vocal parts in treble clef, each with the lyrics "And I hadn't been" underneath. The first vocal part is marked *pp*. The second and third vocal parts are also marked *pp*. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in bass clef, featuring chords and melodic lines. It is marked with *p* and *pp* dynamics. There are two asterisks (*) on the piano staff, one under the first measure and one under the fifth measure. The word "Red" is written below the piano staff at the beginning and in the middle.

move to others. For example, the opening melody (first soprano) appears in the second alto part in verses two and three (exs. 53, 54, 55). A fragment of the opening melody also appears in the first alto part at the fifth verse (exs. 53 & 56). In addition, the opening second alto part is, in essence, the same as the first alto part found in verse two and three (exs. 53, 54, 55). The octave leap originally found in the second alto part of verse one reappears in verse five in the soprano voice (exs. 53 & 56). Lastly, the soprano part that begins verses two and three is used in the second alto part at verse five (exs. 54, 55 & 56). This figure has its origins in the second soprano part of verse one (ex. 53).

Example 53. "Come In" mm. 6-8. Opening Soprano Melody, Verse One.

pp As I came to the edge of the woods,

pp As I came to the edge of the woods,

pp As I came to the edge of the woods,

pp As I came to the edge of the woods,

pp

Example 54. "Come In" mm. 20-22. Opening of verse two, melody in A2.

pp Too dark for a bird *mp* By sleight of

pp Too dark for a bird *mp* By sleight of

pp *express.* Too dark in the wood for a bird *mp* By sleight of

Example 55. "Come In" mm. 34 - 36. Opening of verse three, melody in A2.

The last of the light of the sun That had

The last light of the sun That

The last light of the sun That

Example 56. "Come In" mm. 56 - 58. Opening of verse five, Melody in A1.

But no, I was out for stars:

But no, I was out for stars:

But no, I was out for stars:

Rehearsal Strategies

Although not overly difficult, "Come In" will probably present several challenges for the average high school women's choir. These include the usual problems such as finding entrances and fine tuning chords. However, in this author's opinion, the most formidable aspect of "Come In" is the high degree of vocal control, finesse, and maturity required by a combination of a relatively

slow tempo and varied articulation and dynamic markings. "Come In" is a composition that will not fare well in performance if practiced in haste. This particular piece needs to be rehearsed over a long period of time. This is particularly true for high school singers.

One of the first likely areas of concern for everyone will be accurate, confident entrances. Beginning with the first verse, the chorus may experience difficulty in finding starting pitches. If this occurs, a solution would be to point out the notes in the accompaniment that are the same as their entrance. Then start the piece and have the chorus hold their first note on the word "As" (ex. 57).

Example 57. "Come In" mm. 4-7

The musical score for Example 57, "Come In" mm. 4-7, is presented in G minor and common time. It consists of six staves. The top three staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) with lyrics "As I came to the edge of the". The bottom three staves are piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp*, *p*, and *leggero*. The piano part features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with a crescendo leading to a forte section.

Like the first entrance, the beginning of the second verse can be approached in the same way. Another method is to practicing finding the root of the G minor

chord in measure twenty. The third verse can be dealt with in the same manner as verse two except the pitch the singers enter on is now a third instead of the root.

The entrance on the fourth verse at measure forty-nine often needs extra practice. As mentioned above, one solution is for the choir to learn how to locate the root, third, and fifth of a chord--in this case G minor. Each part may need to practice their entrance alone always stopping on the first word "Far." After each individual part is secure, it is often beneficial to practice the entrance with only two parts at a time--again stopping on the word "Far." Finally all three parts can be practiced (ex. 58).

Example 58. "Come In" mm. 49 & 50

The musical score shows three staves, each representing a different voice part. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). Each staff begins with a dynamic marking of 'f' and an accent (>) over the first note. The lyrics are 'Far in the pil - lar'd dark'. The notes are: Soprano (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5), Alto (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5), and Tenor (F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5).

The next two entrances at measures fifty-six and sixty-one can be approached in a variety of ways. Either technique mentioned above can be applied. A third option would be to have the choir sing the chord prior to the one in question and then practice moving to the difficult-to-find entrance. For example, the last chord at measure fifty-five on the syllable "ment" would be sung and without a break the choir would move to the unison G at measure fifty-six. The next step would

be to observe all rests and lastly to add the accompaniment (ex. 59).

Example 59. "Come In" mm. 54-56.

The musical score for Example 59, "Come In" mm. 54-56, is presented in four staves. The top three staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor/Bass) with lyrics: "in To the dark and lament. But". The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment. The piano part features a series of chords marked "Ped" (pedal) and "cresc." (crescendo). The music is in 4/4 time and G major.

In addition to finding first entrances, many choral groups will also experience confusion locating pitches after they have entered on a unison note and move into parts. This happens at the beginning of the first, second and third verses. One should practice finding the entrance and then move to the next chord and pause. The accompanist should play the chord slowly from the lowest note up. If the group still cannot find their pitches, work in this manner with only one or two voice combinations at a time. Eventually practice these

spots *a cappella* (ex. 60).

Example 60. "Come In" mm. 6 - 7.

The musical score for Example 60, "Come In" mm. 6-7, is presented in five staves. The top three staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor) with lyrics "As I came". The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment. The music is in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major, and features a descending half-step in the vocal lines.

To obtain finely tuned chords within the vocal parts, each part must be learned and sung accurately with close attention paid to descending half steps and accidentals. After each individual part is secure, practice singing two parts together in all possible combinations. Once the singers are secure with their parts, the entire exercise needs to be practiced *a cappella* with care taken to ensure that each part is equally heard. If certain measures are difficult, practice exercises can be created from the music. For example, each chord from measures fifty-three to fifty-five can be turned into half notes and sung on "loo." Each whole note would be held until the chord tunes up (ex. 61). After some practice the tempo can be increased. Vowel unification is also critical for tuning.

Example 61. "Come In" mm. 53 - 55

Al-most like a call to come in To the dark and la-ment.

Al-most like a call to come in To the dark and la-ment.

Al-most like a call to come in To the dark and la-ment.

loo loo loo loo loo loo

The director would be wise to create and develop exercises that could be used during the warm-up to reinforce and practice necessary vocal production required by "Come In." For example, the dynamic levels used in "Come In" range from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* and include some sudden drastic changes. The choral group needs to become adept at making quick accurate changes in dynamic intensities. They also need to learn how to clearly differentiate between such dynamics as *pianissimo*, *piano*, and *mezzo piano*. A creative conductor will modify existing warm-ups or create new ones. Two possible exercises for dynamics are given in examples sixty-two and sixty-three.

Example 62.

ppp pp p mp mf f ff fff ppp pp p mp mf f ff fff

bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee

Example 63.

bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee

Problems in articulation can be addressed much in the same way as dynamics--early and consistent practice. As in most works by Thompson, "Come In" requires a variety of vocal articulations including *staccati*, *tenuti*, accents, and sustained *legati*. All these vocal techniques can be easily learned by incorporating a few relevant warm-up exercises into the ensemble's normal rehearsal routine (ex. 64).

Example 64.

Staccato
Bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee Bee bee bee bee

Legato
bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee

Tenuto
bee Bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee bee

Summary

"Come In," although a challenge for many high school choristers, is worth the time and effort necessary to master the work. Most vocalists enjoy learning this composition because it is highly expressive and the individual lines are interesting to sing. In addition, "Come In" affords many pedagogic opportunities for young singers and aids in the overall development of a choral group.

Chapter Six

The Telephone

'When I was just as far as I could walk
From here today,
There was an hour
All still
When leaning with my head against a flower
I heard you talk.
Don't say I didn't, for I heard you say--
You spoke from that flower on the window sill--
Do you remember what it was you said?'

'First tell me what it was you thought you heard.'

'Having found the flower and driven a bee away,
I leaned by head,
And holding by the stalk,
I listened and I thought I caught the word--
What was it? Did you call me by my name?
Or did you say--
Someone said "Come"--I heard it as I bowed.'

'I may have thought as much, but not aloud.'

'Well, so I came.'

Robert Frost

Introduction

Robert Frost's poem "The Telephone" is a whimsical dialogue between a man and a woman. He wrote the poem for his wife, Elinor, whom Frost had fallen in love with "at sight" while attending Lawrence High School. In the poem a man, while out for a country walk, stops and while leaning up against a flower, imagines he hears his beloved. It is notable and ironic that at this point the man is as far away as he could get from the woman. Not only is he far from her but an hour is spent "all still." It is during this time that he hears her talk. The woman, who is still at home, "spoke from that flower on the window sill--."

Flowers in this poem can be seen as a symbol of special communication between two people that only those who are close with each other are privy to. Traditionally the word "flower" has many connotations associated with it. For example, flowers are given and received between lovers. They have also been used in literature and poetry to portray beauty and sensuality in women. Flowers are inviting to look at, drawing attention. It is because of these connotations that the line, "Having found the flower and driven a bee away," is so interesting. It implies that there is some risk associated with the flower--stings. After driving the bee away, the man not only leans his head toward the flower, but is now more aggressively holding it by the stalk.

Another important line in the poem is, "Did you call me by my name?" which suggests intimacy and the hope for it. There are two ways this poem can be viewed. One is that the relationship is an unequal one with the man being more interested in the relationship than the woman. The other is that both desire to be in each other's company and are both thinking the same thoughts, but the woman is being coy--waiting for the man to make the first move. "The Telephone" suggests a flirtation between the two with the woman being a bit more reserved.

The title of this poem, "The Telephone" is also meaningful. A telephone is a way to communicate--to connect with another person. "Connecting" is important to the subject of this poem. However, telephones are an incomplete method of communication because important aspects such as eye contact and body language are missing. Frost himself did not have a phone in his home and was not enamored with them. With this title he is poking fun at the telephone, those who were smitten with its technology and the fact that all

communication between human beings by its very nature is usually imperfect.

Thompson's musical setting of "The Telephone" retains all the whimsy and flirtatious feel found in Frost's poem. He sets the dialogue using a men's choir and a women's choir. As with all of Thompson's compositions, "The Telephone" is a perfect union between text and music. For example, at measure six, the text "When I was just as far as I could walk from here today" is set using one eighth-note per syllable. This constant eighth-note pulse at the indicated tempo of quarter-note equals 116 gives the line a sense of urgency. It also paints the word "walking" and portrays the breathless excitement of the man wanting to convey something important. Word painting continues at measures nine and ten where the words "All still" are set with longer note values that contrast the surrounding eighth-note motion (ex. 65).

Articulation markings, are also carefully designed to enhance the meaning of the text. In measures fourteen through sixteen, Thompson has placed an articulation mark over each note in the vocal parts. These articulations give the music a light slightly flirting character. By contrast, measures seventeen through twenty, set to slurred, accented and *tenuto* notes of longer values, convey a change in mood. The man has now turned more serious with an imploring tone of voice. The *a cappella* setting also draws attention to the importance of this verse (ex. 66). The women's reply, measures twenty-one through twenty-six, is set to abrupt quarter notes and rests, characterizing someone who is coyly choosing her words with care (ex. 67).

Example 65. "The Telephone" mm. 6 - 10.

When I was just as far as I could walk From here to - day,
 When I was just as far as I could walk From here to - day,
 When I was just as far as I could walk From here to - day
 When I was just as far as I could walk From here to - day

There was an hour All still When lean-ing
 There was an hour All still When lean-ing
 There was an hour All still When lean-ing
 There was an hour All still When lean-ing

Example 66. "The Telephone" mm. 14 - 21.

heard you say You spoke from that flow-er on the win-dow still

heard you say You spoke from that flow-er on the win-dow still

heard you say You spoke from that flow-er on the win-dow still

heard you say You spoke from that flow-er on the win-dow still

f dolce Do you re-mem - ber what it was you said? *Poco ritenuto Tempo I* *p* (*poco rall.*)

f dolce Do you re-mem - ber what it was you said? *p* (*poco rall.*)

f dolce Do you re-mem - ber what it was you said? *p* (*poco rall.*)

f dolce Do you re-mem - ber what it was you said? *p* (*poco rall.*)

Example 67. "The Telephone" mm. 21 - 27.

The image shows three staves of musical notation for the song "The Telephone" (measures 21-27). Each staff begins with the tempo marking *poco rall.*, followed by the dynamic marking *prudente* and *p*, and then *a tempo*. The lyrics "First tell me what it was you thought you heard." are written below each staff. The music is in a key with two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests, with a dashed line indicating a continuation of the melody in the final measure of the third staff.

Beginning in measure thirty, the man continues to tell his story, which builds to a musical climax with ascending pitch levels (ex. 68). Suddenly the dynamic level drops from *forte* to *piano* in measure thirty-seven where the answer is about to be revealed. The dynamics soften as if someone is sharing a secret. After a measure of silence, the words "Someone said 'Come'" are sung slowly and softly--like a whisper. The measure of silence brings to mind two people about ready to share a secret and is used as a transition to the following phrase. Perhaps the rest is inserted for effect, as a storyteller would pause to savor the best part of a tale they are telling (ex. 68). Another example of word painting is the use of the chord F#, C#, A, & D# each time the text is punctuated with a question mark. Thompson leaves the listener hanging on this harmony for three measures to suggest the interrogative (ex. 68).

Immediately following the words, "Someone said 'Come,'" the music becomes louder and faster as the men sing *a cappella* "I heard it as I bow'd." Thompson often stresses the importance of a line of text by setting it *a cappella*. The women's reply, "I may have thought as much, but not aloud!," is treated with the same abrupt quarter notes and rests as mentioned above.

Example 68. "The Telephone" mm. 34 - 43.

poco a poco cresc. *appassionato*
hold - ing by the stalk, I list - en'd and I thought I caught the word What

poco a poco cresc. *appassionato*
hold - ing by the stalk, I list - en'd and I thought I caught the word What

poco a poco cresc. *appassionato*
hold - ing by the stalk, I list - en'd and I thought I caught the word What

poco a poco cresc. *appassionato*
hold - ing by the stalk, I list - en'd and I thought I caught the word What

p *f* *p* *poco a poco rall.* *pp*
was it? Did you call me by my name? Or did you say?

f *p* *f* *p* *poco a poco rall.* *pp*
was it? Did you call me by my name? Or did you say?

f *p* *f* *p* *poco a poco rall.* *pp*
was it? Did you call me by my name? Or did you say?

f *p* *f* *p* *poco a poco rall.* *pp*
was it? Did you call me by my name? Or did you say?

pp *Meno mosso* *poch. rall.* *a tempo*
Some - one said "Come" |

pp *poch. rall.* *a tempo*
Some - one said "Come" |

pp *poch. rall.* *a tempo*
Some - one said "Come" |

pp *poch. rall.* *a tempo*
Some - one said "Come" |

The last line of text "Well, so I came" is noteworthy for its use of rests, accents and dynamics. The word "well" is sung in the same manner it would be spoken in this type of situation. At the conclusion of "The Telephone," the women hum for a full measure much in the same way a listener would acknowledge someone who is speaking to them with a little nodding of the head and a murmuring of "mmmm hmmm" (ex. 69).

Example 69. "The Telephone" mm. 53 - 57.

The musical score for Example 69, "The Telephone" (measures 53-57), is presented in four staves. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is common time (C). The score includes dynamics of *ff* (fortissimo) and *pp* (pianissimo), and tempo markings of *a tempo* and *Tempo I*. The lyrics are "Well so I came." The vocal parts (Soprano and Alto) feature rests and accents, while the piano parts feature a hum.

Resources

Thompson composed "The Telephone" for mixed chorus (SA/TTBB) and piano or orchestra. As mentioned above, the text is set in a dialogue between the women and men. The women's parts are straightforward and, with the exception of one low F in the second alto part, should not present any difficulties for the average high school chorister. However, the men's parts do require a

fairly advanced ensemble. Each of the four men's parts is truly a separate and independent line without doubling. The tessitura of the first tenor part may present a challenge as it includes high G#'s and A's.

The tempo and articulation requirements of the accompaniment demand an advanced level pianist. The piano supports the vocal parts directly as well as operating as an independent line during the interludes. As the accompaniment supports the vocal parts, it is critical that the accompanist perform with the same articulation as the singers.

If the director chooses to use the orchestral arrangement of "The Telephone," the following are needed: two flutes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, triangle, harp, and strings. All the parts are uncomplicated and should not pose a problem for average high school instrumentalists. Due to the presence of *divisi* parts, at least three of each string instrument will be needed except for the contrabass which requires only two. Although measure fifty-three indicates a *divisi* part for six cellos, the director may out of necessity omit the pitches doubled at the octave.

Analysis

"The Telephone" begins in the key of A major and modulates to F# minor at measure twenty-two. While many cadences are on A major and the piece ends in A, Thompson's harmonic language seems concerned with the voice leading and the demands of text rather than with harmonic progressions. For example, the instrumental introduction employs melodic sequences based on fourths and fifths. Measures six and seven provide another example as the upper three voices move in parallel 6/4 chords against a bass "pedal" (ex. 70).

Example 70. "The Telephone" mm. 6 - 7.

The image shows a musical score for four voices (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) for measures 6 and 7 of "The Telephone". The music is in 7/8 time with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The lyrics are: "When I was just as far as I could walk From here to - day,". Performance markings include *p* (piano) at the start of each line and *poco rall.* (poco rallentando) above the final notes of each line.

"The Telephone" is through-composed with enough similarity of melodic and rhythm ideas to provide unity. The overall structure of the piece is introduction, A, B, A1, B1, coda. The composition begins with four measures of instrumental introduction, followed by fourteen measures sung by the men (A) and followed by the women (B) at measure twenty-one. The second half of "The Telephone" begins with the men at measure twenty-six (A1) and is followed by the women at measure forty-six (B2). The men begin the coda at measure fifty-three which dovetails into the instrumental finale.

Rehearsal Strategies

Three areas require extra attention during rehearsals of "The Telephone." They include articulation marks, securing entrances, and balance. Thompson has utilized articulation markings to imitate normal speech inflections, patterns,

and tempos. Articulations and dynamics can be practiced by speaking the words before singing them. Recording and playing back rehearsals can also be helpful when members of the group “feel” they are correctly producing articulations and dynamics but are not. Often singers do not fully understand the need to exaggerate or overly emphasize such things as accents, final consonants, *crescendi* and other musical devices.

Entering pitches may be difficult to find at measure twenty-one. The women should be told that their starting pitch, middle C, is the same pitch that the first tenors have just sung. In practice, the altos can sing with the first tenors and then sing their first note. If the pitches are missed at measure twenty-two, on the word “tell,” each part may be played and sung separately so that the singers may hear the intervals in question. Next it is wise to combine parts two at a time so that the singers may hear their parts in relationship to all others. Finally, all three parts should be sung together. During this entire exercise the pitches on the word “tell” should be held long enough so that the singers “lock onto” the correct intervals and chords (ex. 71).

Example 71. “The Telephone” mm. 20 - 22.

The musical score for Example 71, "The Telephone" mm. 20-22, is presented in four staves. The top three staves are vocal parts for First Tenor, Alto, and First Soprano. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is common time (C). The music is in 3/4 time. The lyrics are "First tell me" for the vocal parts and "said?" for the piano part. The piano part has a fermata over the word "said?".

Balance and tuning of the men's parts may also require attention.

Improper balance between the parts can often affect the ensemble's intonation. During rehearsals each part needs to have the opportunity to sing with each of the other parts. Singing in a scrambled position may also help choristers develop an awareness of other parts and a sensitivity for balance. For tuning purposes, certain notes of a chord must be emphasized. In order of importance, these are the root, fifth, third, and seventh. In addition, parts sung in a higher register (tenor I) are more easily heard than lower pitches in other parts. The lower parts must be of sufficient volume to adequately support the higher pitches or intonation will suffer.

Summary

Although "The Telephone" is equally deserving as any of the other six pieces included in *Frostiana*, it is seldom performed alone. While the medium for which it was written has had something to do with this, "The Telephone" has all the typical well-crafted compositional traits of Thompson.

Chapter Seven

A Girl's Garden

A neighbor of mine in the village
Likes to tell how one spring
When she was a girl on the farm, she did
A childlike thing.

One day she asked her father
To give her a garden plot
To plant and tend and reap herself,
And he said, 'Why not?'

In casting about for a corner
He thought of an idle bit
Of walled-off ground where a shop had stood,
And he said, 'Just it.'

And he said, 'That ought to make you
An ideal one-girl farm,
And give you a chance to put some strength
On your slim-jim arm.'

It was not enough of a garden,
Her father said, to plow;
So she had to work it all by hand,
But she don't mind now.

She wheeled the dung in the wheelbarrow
Along a stretch of road;
But she always ran away and left
Her not-nice load,

And hid from anyone passing.
And then she begged the seed.
She says she thinks she planted one
Of all things but weed.

A hill each of potatoes,
Radishes, lettuce, peas,
Tomatoes, beets, beans, pumpkins, corn
And even fruit trees.

And yes, she has long mistrusted
That a cider apple tree
In bearing there today is hers,
Or at least may be.

Her crop was a miscellany
When all was said and done,
A little bit of everything,
A great deal of none.

Now when she sees in the village
How village things go,
Just when it seems to come in right,
She says, 'I know!

'It's as when I was a farmer--'
Oh, never by way of advice!
And she never sins by telling the tale
To the Same person twice.

Robert Frost

Introduction

In comparison to other poems by Robert Frost, very little has been written about "A Girl's Garden." What is known is that Frost's eldest daughter, Lesley, is the subject of the poem. The poem itself tells a story about one girl's interesting experience with a garden. Metaphorically, the poem is an indictment against all those who have been given an opportunity when asked but who fail to take

advantage of it once granted. The subject of the poem asks her father to “give her a garden plot.” He agrees and sees the possibility for growth and character development in his daughter which is reflected with the words, “And give you a chance to put some strength on your slim-jim arm.” As told in the fifth stanza, the garden given to the girl can be worked by one person and there is no reason why the garden should not be a success. However, the character in the poem fails. First of all, she is embarrassed to be seen wheeling “dung in the wheelbarrow” which shows a basic lack of understanding of the importance of what is necessary to make things grow. There is no reason for her to hide “from anyone passing,” because in a farming community it would be perfectly normal to see someone with a wheelbarrow full of manure. The implication here is that the girl is not really willing to do what it takes to care for the garden and make it fruitful. Secondly, the garden is planted in a haphazard manner. She can not remember what she planted or how much. The result is that the garden produced “a little bit of everything” and “a great deal of none.” Later in life the subject of the poem pretends to have knowledge that she not only does not have, but that she failed at. This is the “sin” referred to in the last stanza. In the end, the girl--who is now a woman living in the village instead of on the farm-- must be careful not to reveal her “sin” by giving advice or “telling the tale to the same person twice.”

One other interesting aspect about this poem is the underlying tension between village and farm people. There is a sense that the girl was never really a “farm” person at heart. Frost definitely felt that the farming life was preferable to village or city life. This poem implies that city and village people are ignorant of important basics of life--such as how to make things grow.

About the premiere performance Marshall Mertins (a friend of Frost's) commented,

Seven poems had been set to music by Thompson. One was a masterpiece of collaboration in the opinion of listeners and music critics--"A Girl's Garden." It skipped out across the footlights in a manner seldom heard. The words fitted the music, the music the words. Not often do poet and composer achieve such unity. Lesley should have been proud.³⁷

Thompson's setting of "A Girl's Garden" and the fifth piece in the *Frostiana* set is sung in a conversational/folk style.³⁸ Because the text is critical in sustaining interest in the composition,³⁹ Thompson has set the first five verses in unison. He uses unison singing as an interpretive factor which helps keep the melody fluent and the text clear.⁴⁰ Natural speech rhythms are created by meter changes, subdivisions of the beat, and use of syncopations, accents and rests.⁴¹ One example of meter change, syncopation and use of a rest to reflect normal speech patterns can be observed in measure eleven through thirteen (ex. 72).

Example 72. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 11 - 13.

plant and tend and reap her-self, And he said, "Why not?"

³⁷ Marshall L. Mertins, Robert Frost: Life and Talks-Walking (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press: 1965), 383.

³⁸ Maxwell, 45.

³⁹ Lupo, 50.

⁴⁰ Maxwell, 65.

⁴¹ Brookhart, 203 & 257.

As before, subdivisions of the beat occur frequently in order to accommodate speech inflections. Measures four through seven are an excellent representation of typical subdivisions that occur throughout the work (ex. 73).

Example 73. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 4 - 7.

A neigh - bor of mine in the vil - lage Likes to
tell how one spring When she was a girl on a farm, She

A different type of subdivision can be found at the end of "A Girl's Garden" in measures seventy-nine and eighty where Thompson has divided the basic beat into triplets (ex. 74).

Example 74. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 78 - 80.

Allegro **Lento**

Oh, nev-er by way of ad-vice! And she never sins by tell-ing the tale
Oh, nev-er by way of ad-vice! And she never sins by tell-ing the tale
Oh, nev-er by way of ad-vice! And she never sins by tell-ing the tale

In addition to carefully setting the rhythm of the text, Thompson has used word painting when appropriate. Examples are best illustrated in the last verse where the tempo changes reflect the meaning of the text (ex. 75).

Example 75. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 74 - 75.

The musical score for Example 75 consists of three staves of music. The lyrics are: "She says, 'I know! 'It's as" on the top staff, "She says 'I Know! 'It's as" on the middle staff, and "She says 'I Know! 'It's as" on the bottom staff. The score includes performance markings: "sospirando" with a hairpin, "p", and "pp dolcissimo". The tempo is marked "Lento".

Another example of word painting is the way Thompson uses the accompaniment to illustrate the text, "She wheel'd the dung in the wheelbarrow along a stretch of road," at measures thirty-three and thirty-four. The grace notes may portray the "bumps" on the road (ex. 76).

Example 76. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 33-34

The musical score for Example 76 shows a piano accompaniment. The right hand features grace notes above the main notes, and the left hand has a bass line. The score includes performance markings: "p" and "pp".

The following words, "But she always ran away and left her not nice load," are painted at measures thirty-nine and forty by the use of running sixteenth notes to depict the girl running away from "her not nice load" (ex.77).

Example 77. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 39-40.

A final instance of word painting is found in measure eighty-one where the words, "To the same person twice" are set differently. This is to portray the telling of a "tale" in more than one version and how the storyteller has to be careful not to "sin by telling the tale to the same person twice" (ex. 78).

Example 78. "A Girl's Garden" m 81- 82.

As mentioned above, the first five verses are in unison. The last verse is sung in three parts. As has been seen previously, thicker vocal textures in closing sections is a common compositional device of Thompson's (ex. 75).

Another noteworthy observation about "A Girl's Garden" is that Thompson has created intensity by rhythmic drive instead of other compositional devices such as use of dissonance.⁴² This rhythmic drive is an essential part of the essence of "A Girl's Garden" and is evident particularly in the instrumental accompaniment where perpetual eighth and sixteenth notes are employed (exs. 76, 77, 79, & 86). The constant eighth-note and sixteenth-note motion is only absent during the last verse which is mostly sung *a cappella* (ex. 90). The instrumental finale returns with the constant sixteenth notes.

Resources

"A Girl's Garden" is composed for three-part chorus of women's voices (SAA) with piano or orchestra. The vocal parts briefly require low A's for the sopranos and first altos and low F's for the second altos. This may be an obstacle for the average high school vocalist - especially fourteen and fifteen year-olds whose voices are still developing and may not possess those pitches.

The piano arrangement demands a fairly high degree of technical ability and may be too difficult for an average high school accompanist without considerable coaching and practice. The difficulty is a result of a very fast tempo, (*Allegro con brio* with the quarter note equaling 126), numerous passages with running sixteenth notes, and fast register changes. Another problem may be found in the observation of articulation markings. Thompson has taken great care in marking almost every single note with *staccati*, accents,

⁴²Forbes, 18.

tenuti, and *sforzandi* (ex. 79). The correct articulation of "A Girl's Garden" is just as important as accurate pitch and rhythm. Without it the composition loses its essence.

Example 79. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 59 - 60.

crop was a mis-cel-la-ny When all was said and done, A

sopra

f * *f* * *f* * *f* * *f* * *f* * *f* * *f* *

To perform "A Girl's Garden" with full orchestration, the following are needed; two flutes, two oboes, two B flat clarinets, two bassoons, one C trumpet, first violins, second violins, violas, cellos, and contrabasses. The challenge for the average high school instrumentalist in performing "A Girl's Garden" will be in executing rapid sixteenth notes passages and in rendering off-beat eighth notes (ex. 80).

Example 80. "A Girl's Garden" first & second violins m. 1 - 3.

Allegro con brio

pp *f* *pp* *f*

pp *f* *pp* *f*

Analysis

"A Girl's Garden" uses many of the same compositional devices found earlier in "The Road Not Taken," "The Pasture," "Come In," and "The Telephone." For example, like "The Road Not Taken," "A Girl's Garden" is in D *Aeolian* and uses frequent stepwise chordal progressions (see ex. 77). Both the lack of C-sharps and perpetual parallel movement gives "A Girl's Garden" a strong modal flavor. Thompson also uses what one writer has termed a "gapped scale"--a scale in which some pitches are missing.⁴³ The "gap" can appear anywhere in the basic scale pattern and is common in Thompson's choral music. In "A Girl's Garden" the D natural minor scale is "gapped" between A and C. Thompson has avoided using all B-flats in the sung melody of this work until verse six. At the end, where the choral parts divide into three, the B-flat finally appears. However, the B-flat is only used in the lower two voices and not the voice carrying the melodic idea (ex. 81).

Example 81. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 75 - 77.

Lento

The musical score consists of three staves, each representing a different vocal part. The tempo is marked **Lento**. The first staff has a dynamic marking of *p* for the first measure and *pp dolcissimo* for the rest. The second and third staves have *p* for the first measure and *pp dolcissimo* for the rest. The lyrics are: "know! 't's as when I was a farm - er'". The notes are: know! (D4), 't's (E4), as (F4), when (G4), I (A4), was (B4), a (C5), farm - (D5), er' (E5). There are fermatas over the first two notes of each staff. A hairpin crescendo is shown at the end of each staff.

⁴³ McGilvray, 66.

This “gapped” scale gives “A Girl’s Garden” a modal folk-song quality.

Although some writers have stated that “A Girl’s Garden” is “pentatonic,”⁴⁴ the term pentatonic is not an entirely accurate description of this composition. The word pentatonic by definition usually denotes a scale of five tones to the octave without semitones. “A Girl’s Garden” undoubtedly uses both six pitch classes and semitones. However, Thompson so cleverly melds the “gapped” D aeolian scale and the F tonal pentatonic scale that “A Girl’s Garden” takes on pentatonic characteristics. Compare the above mentioned scales and their use in verse one of “A Girl’s Garden” (exs. 82, 83 & 84).

Example 82. Pentatonic scale.



Example 83. “Gapped” scale.



Example 84. “A Girl’s Garden” mm. 4 - 13. Use of extended pentatonic.

A neigh-bor of mine in the vil-lage Likes to tell how one spring When
she was a girl on a farm, She did a child-like thing. One day she ask'd her fa-ther To
give her a gar-den plot To plant and tend and reap herself, And he said. 'Why not?'

⁴⁴Sparger. 66.

The form of "A Girl's Garden" is strophic with instrumental interludes. The twelve stanzas of the poem are grouped by couplets into six verses. Verses one through five include eight to ten measures depending on the requirements in setting the text. The sixth and concluding verse spans sixteen measures. The variations in the basic eight-measure verse are mostly a result of rhythmic augmentation.

For the first five verses, each pair of stanzas creates a roughly four plus four measure phrase structure with the climax occurring one measure after the midway point. The phrase is built using rising pitch levels. Once the tonic accent, D, is reached the phrase quickly drops in pitch again (ex. 85).

Example 85. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 4 - 13.

A neigh-bor of mine in the vil-lage Likes to tell how one spring When
she was a girl on a farm, She did a child-like thing. One day she ask'd her fa-ther To
give her a gar-den plot To plant and tend and reap herself, And he said, "Why not?"

The last verse starts by moving the first pitch, A, up an octave and augmenting it from an eighth note to two tied whole notes (ex. 86). The next four measures comprise a phrase which builds up to the D on the word "I" (ex. 87).

The final phrase crests on the word "never" and is composed using short two-measure or one-measure segments (see ex. 90). The concluding note is augmented for three measures.

Example 86. "A Girl's Garden" measures 69 - 70.

sfz p subito cresc. molto

NOW

sopra

sotto

Red * Red * Red * Red * Red * Red * Red * Red * Red *

Example 87. "A Girl's Garden" measures 71 - 74.

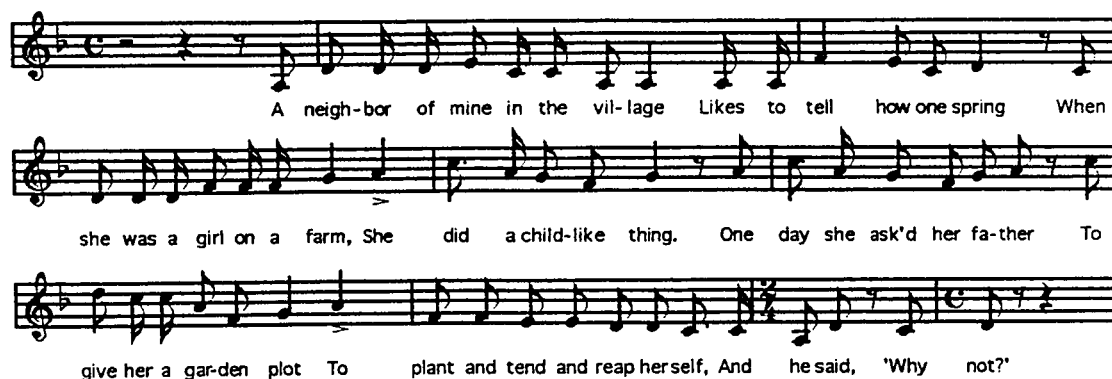
when she sees in the vil - lage How vil - lage things go Just

when it seems to come in right, She says, 'l

Rehearsal Strategies

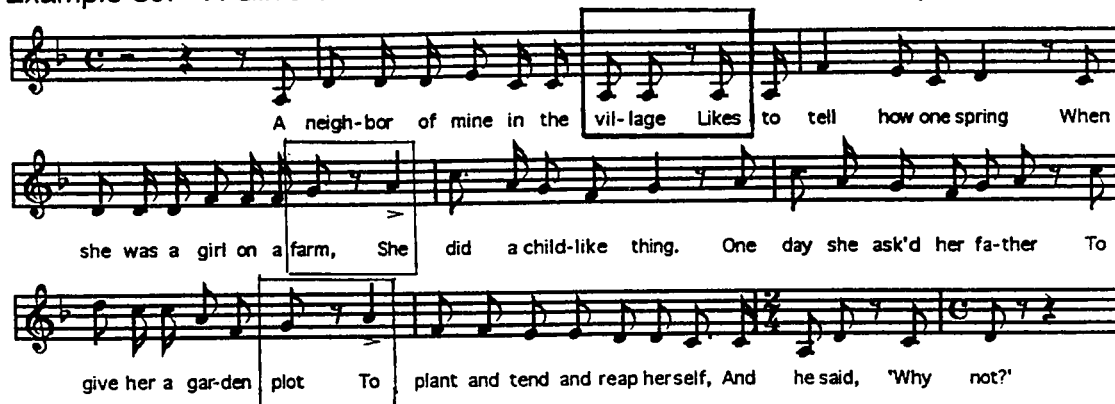
Six aspects about "A Girl's Garden" are likely to be a source of some difficulty for the average women's choir. They include unified breathing, observing articulation and dynamic marks, clear articulation of the text, tempo changes, *a cappella* singing, and rhythm. The first, breathing, is relatively simple to address. The conductor can insert rests in several places where none exist so that the singers may breathe. To illustrate, compare the following two figures where the quarter-notes on the words "village," "farm," and "plot" have been altered to eighth-notes with eighth-note rests. These modifications will not only ensure that the choir is breathing together, but will also facilitate clear diction and the ability to place accents on the words "she" and "To" (exs. 88-89).

Example 88. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 4 - 13 as written.



A neigh-bor of mine in the vil-lage Likes to tell how one spring When
she was a girl on a farm, She did a child-like thing. One day she ask'd her fa-ther To
give her a gar-den plot To plant and tend and reap herself, And he said, "Why not?"

Example 89. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 4 - 13 as performed with interpolated rests.



A neigh-bor of mine in the vil-lage Likes to tell how one spring When
she was a girl on a farm, She did a child-like thing. One day she ask'd her fa-ther To
give her a gar-den plot To plant and tend and reap herself, And he said, "Why not?"

Crisp, clear, and unified articulation of the words is essential in "A Girl's Garden" and may prove troublesome to some ensemble members. One possible approach to this challenge is to have the entire choral group practice speaking the words in rhythm until they can speak the words precisely together. All articulation marks, such as accents and *staccati*, should be carefully observed while practicing this way. After experiencing these accents and *staccati* in speech, most choristers will find it simple to transfer the correct articulations to their singing. Releases can be approached in a similar fashion.

Another challenge concerns the changes of tempo that occur from measure seventy-five to the end of the piece. The conductor needs to make

sure that the preparatory beat for each entrance and its corresponding breath is in the new tempo. In addition, gestures of syncopation from the conductor in measures seventy-six, seventy-eight, and eighty-one will help guarantee precise entrances. For example, the second beat in measure seventy-six must be strong--almost accented compared to the surrounding beats--in order for the singers to accurately sing on the off-beat. Beat two should also be strong in measure seventy-eight. Lastly, subdivision of beat four may be used in measures seventy-five and seventy-nine to help the choir adjust to the new *lento* tempo (ex. 90).

Example 90. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 75 - 79.

The musical score for Example 90, "A Girl's Garden" mm. 75-79, is presented in four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and a piano accompaniment staff. The score is in common time (C) and features a tempo change from *Lento* to *Allegro* between measures 75 and 76. The lyrics are: "know! 'It's as when I was a farmer Oh, nev-er by way of ad-vice! And she know! 'It's as when I was a farmer Oh, never by way of ad-vice! And she know! 'It's as when I was a farmer Oh, nev-er by way of ad-vice! And she". The piano part has a *Lento* section from measure 75 to 76 and an *Allegro* section from measure 77 to 79. Dynamic markings include *p*, *pp*, *pp dolcissimo*, and *pp rall.* The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and fermatas.

Concurrent with these tempo changes, the ensemble must also sing *a cappella* for the first time in the composition. The pitfall here is that the singers will allow the pitch to sag and will be out-of-tune with the accompaniment when it returns in measure seventy-nine. The altos are most likely to experience this. All

descending intervals, especially half-steps in the first alto part, should be scrutinized to make sure they are not sung too widely. Also since repeated notes tend to sag, care needs to be taken in the second alto part on the words, "I was a farmer" in measure seventy-six. Imagery, such as rising elevators or escalators, often will assist singers in staying on pitch (see ex. 90).

The last place that may require extra attention is found in measure eighty-one at the words, "To the same person twice." The difficulty here is that the rhythm is different between the soprano and alto parts. If each part is not sung precisely and crisply, the compositional effect that Thompson intended for the text here is lost. As mentioned above, speaking the words with the correct tempo, rhythm, and articulation before attempting to sing them will greatly facilitate the singer's performance. Furthermore, the conductor must insist that each member breathe in rhythm on the eighth-note rest that occurs in the middle of that phrase (ex. 91).

Example 91. "A Girl's Garden" mm. 81 - 82.

Allegro **Allegro vivace**

p *pp*

To the same per - son twice.

p *pp*

To the same per - son twice.

p *pp*

To the same per - son twice.

Summary

Lupo has likened "A Girl's Garden" to a simple ballad accompanied by a virtuosic piano imitation of a stringed instrument.⁴⁵ Because of a "A Girl's Garden" ballad-like characteristics, the composition has immediate audience appeal. Singers, especially high school students, enjoy the rhythmic vitality of the piece and the "special effects" such are found on the word "now" and "I know." The accompaniment, which is equally as important as the vocal parts, amplifies and supports the meaning behind the text. Thompson has successfully created a composition in which the text of the poetry, the vocal parts, and the instrumentation are all perfectly balanced and complimentary.

⁴⁵Lupo, 49.

Chapter Eight

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep,
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Robert Frost

Introduction

“Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening” is probably one of Frost's best known, most loved, and often misunderstood poems. Frost wrote the poem in a matter of minutes without any strain, after staying up all night working on *New Hampshire*. Unlike “A Girl's Garden,” much has been written about this poem. However, according to Frost himself, many writers have over-interpreted the fundamental intent of this poem. There are basically two ways “Stopping by Woods” is understood. The first is the obvious one and the other is that the word “sleep” is symbolic for death. One conversation about the meaning of the last stanza between Frost and another person went as follows:

Frost: I told him I meant that it was time to go home.

Other: Yes, but what did you have in mind when you made that statement?

Frost: I had in mind that it was getting late and I should be moving on.
 Other: Yes, but what hidden--symbolic--meaning did you intend to record?
 Frost: Well, I thought it was about time I was getting to hell out of there.⁴⁶

Frost also stated;

I wonder at times how much of my poetry is understood. One thing. You have to know the difference between a rake and a hoe to understand it. As to what I mean by some of it, let me say, I have the first and second reason for writing it--either one or both of them--after which the critics proceed to add from a third to a seventh reason. They have more reasons, more meanings, than I ever thought of for my verse. . . .

Now Ciardi is a nice fellow--one of those bold, brassy fellows who go ahead and say all sorts of things. He makes my "Stopping by Woods" out to be a death poem. Well, it would be like this if it were. I'd say, "This is all very lovely, but I must be getting on to heaven." There'd be no absurdity in that. That's all right, but it's hardly a death poem. Just as if I should say here tonight, "This is all very well, but I must be getting on to Phoenix, Arizona, to lecture there." Or, after an evening with friends, reading and talking. "This is all very well, very cozy and nice, but I've got to be getting on. Got to teach a class tomorrow morning." . . .

Now, some poets like obscurity. It gets people talking about their verse. These critics like to swim way out beyond the danger signal and stick their necks out. "Stopping by Woods" is a perfectly natural poem. No mystery about it. There doesn't seem to be any way to keep people from making up meanings and creating mysteries and interpolating ciphers when it comes to poetry. . . . These people can't seem to get it through their heads that the obvious meaning of a poem is the right one.⁴⁷

It would seem that "Stopping by Woods" exquisitely describes a person who has momentarily paused to delight in and behold in solitude the lulling loveliness of nature--the woods filling up with snow. This ability to stop, relax and appreciate a simple, beautiful natural setting is often lacking in people--especially those who are always in a hurry.

Perhaps some of the misinterpretation in regards to Frost's poetry is the

⁴⁶ Mertins, 304.

⁴⁷ Mertins, 371-372.

result of the poet's own seemingly contradictory statements such as the ones made above and pronouncements like,

There are many other things I have found myself saying about poetry, but the chiefest of these is that it is metaphor, saying one thing and meaning another, saying one thing in terms of another, the pleasure of ulteriority. Poetry is simply made of metaphor. . . . Every poem is a new metaphor inside or it is nothing. And there is a sense in which all poems are the same old metaphor always.⁴⁸

Other statements of this kind have been previously seen regarding "The Road Not Taken." Possibly Robert Frost believed that poetry as an art should be felt and experienced--not factually explained. Maybe explaining poems detracts from the mystery of how great literature can speak to different people in more than one way. Frost's intent is probably best explained by his following words

A poet, I maintain, if he wants to, has a right to say one thing and mean another. I've done it in a lot of poems. I'm not going to name the poems. That's for you to figure out.⁴⁹

Thompson's composition "Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening" is a beautiful illustration of his ability to set a text in a meaningful and exquisite way. Every compositional device used by Thompson in "Stopping by Woods" serves to further enhance the meaning of the poem. The instrumental introduction begins with a pattern of descending staccato eighth notes which begin in the upper register of the piano arrangement, or with the harp in the orchestral arrangement. These passages are designed to depict the gently falling flakes of snow which gradually drift to the ground. Another writer has suggested that the alternating perfect fourths and fifths in these staccato passages are meant to depict the horse's harness bells.⁵⁰ Even the tempo, *Lento assai* with a

⁴⁸ Robert Frost, Selected Prose of Robert Frost (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), 24.

⁴⁹ Mertins, 303.

⁵⁰ Lupo, 20 & 21.

Example 93. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 4 - 8.

mp

Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the vil-lege though; He

mp

Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the vil-lege though; He

mp

Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the vil-lege though; He

mp legato

Another example of musical enhancement of the text occurs in measures twenty-eight and twenty-nine in the piano accompaniment where Thompson pauses much like the person in the poem who has momentarily halted to observe the winter scene (ex. 94). The pause in measure twenty-eight on dissonant intervals in the relatively high register of the piano may also be an imitation of harness bells.⁵¹ This is borne out in the orchestral arrangement where five quick notes depict the following words, "He gives his harness bells a shake" (ex. 95). These notes are played on a glockenspiel.

⁵¹ Lupo, 62.

Example 94. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 27 - 30.

Musical score for Example 94, measures 27-30. The score consists of four staves. The top two staves are vocal lines with lyrics "He" and "He". The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, and *pp*. Performance markings include *Pia* and *Sempre*.

Example 95. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" m. 28 - 29.

Musical score for Example 95, measures 28-29. It shows a single staff of piano accompaniment in treble clef.

In measures thirty-five through thirty-nine, the ascending accompaniment illustrates the text, "The only other sound's the sweep of easy wind and downy flake." The word "flake" is also sung at the exact return of the "falling" staccato eighth notes in the next piano interlude (ex. 96).

Example 96. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 35 - 39.

on - ly oth - er sound's the sweep Of eas - y wind and down - y flake.

on - ly oth - er sound's the sweep Of eas - y wind and down - y flake.

on - ly oth - er sound's the sweep Of eas - y wind and down - y flake.

Poco cresc. *mp dim.* *pp*

gliss.

In the final verse of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening," Thompson augments the words "deep," "keep," and "sleep." The longest augmentation occurs on the word "sleep." These augmentations depict the serene, restful, hushed and tranquil atmosphere which lulls the traveler into an almost drowsy dream-like state of mind. An *ostinato* bass in the accompaniment concurrent with metric augmentations in the vocal parts suggest a traveler who has stalled and while idling finds a desire to stay (ex. 97).

Example 97. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 52 - 55.

The last line of the poem, "And miles to go before I sleep," is repeated in the time signature of 4/4 and note values are further augmented. For example, eighth and quarter notes have been transformed into quarter and half notes respectively. The meter change and inserted rests serve to further emphasize the still silence of the snowy woods. All motion finally ceases on the final word "sleep" with a *fermata*. This *fermata* is followed by a full measure of silence and then the return of the delicate "falling" snow (ex. 98).

Analysis

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is in the mode of F *aeolian* (F natural minor), with occasional use of F harmonic minor in measures eight,

Example 98. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 55 - 61.

And miles to go be- fore I sleep.

And miles to go be- fore I sleep.

And miles to go be- fore I sleep.

twenty, and thirty-four where the E-flat is raised (see ex. 93). Each of the first three verses concludes on an F minor chord but the fourth verse pauses on an E-flat major chord to portray the text (ex. 98). The E-flat chord occurs on the word "sleep" and gives the listener a feeling of tranquil peacefulness. However, it is not a complete moment of rest because the traveler must continue on his/her journey. The overall lack of dissonance and preponderance of stepwise motion contributes to the serenity of the composition.

Thompson has set the four stanzas of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" in a strophic manner with each verse preceded by four measures of instrumental introduction or interlude. The instrumental introduction and interludes are set almost the same with minor differences occurring in measure thirteen where the left hand has been moved down an octave (exs. 92 & 99). One possible reason for the difference is that Thompson wanted the higher octave notes in the introduction to depict delicate, light snowflakes. In measure

thirteen Thompson may have moved the notes down an octave to better support the vocal lines.

Unlike the introduction and interludes, which are in common time, the verses are set in 6/8 time signature and are eight measures long including two four-measure phrases. Each four-measure phrase corresponds to two lines of Frost's poetry. Again, as has been noted in previous works, Thompson uses dovetailing to achieve smooth transitions between interludes and sung verses. The accompaniment supports the voices during the verses (ex. 99).

Example 99. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 13-16.

The musical score for Example 99, "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" measures 13-16, consists of five staves. The top three staves are vocal parts for Soprano, Alto, and Bass. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment. The vocal lines are in 6/8 time and include lyrics: "Snow" and "My". The piano accompaniment is in 6/8 time and includes dynamic markings like "pp" and "plu p". The score shows dovetailing between the vocal phrases and the piano accompaniment.

The interlude to the third verse begins like the first two but is two measures longer where, as mentioned above, Thompson has paused in measures twenty-eight and twenty-nine to depict a person and a horse motionless and silently

watching “downy flake.” Other than this, the first three verses are fundamentally the same.

The fourth interlude is similar to the previous three yet is distinct. In addition, instead of setting the text within eight measures like the first three verses, the last verse is seventeen measures long. The difference in duration is due to the augmentation of certain key words of the poem such as “deep,” “keep,” and “sleep.” Other than the augmented words, the first three lines of the last verse are the same as the first three verses. In contrast, Thompson has set the fourth line of the last verse with even greater augmentation to portray the long distance of the “miles” still needed to go. This last line of text is also different being in common time instead of 6/8. With eight measures of instrumental coda, the piece softly concludes (see exs. 97 & 98).

Resources

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” is composed for three-part men’s chorus and piano or orchestra. The vocal parts are suitable for high school students who have some background in part singing. Melodically, all parts mostly move in conjunct motion and are notable because they encourage beautiful and healthy vocal production. Depending on the ability and age of the performers, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” could be performed by a large ensemble or a smaller group with as few as three on a part.

Although not technically difficult, “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” does require an advanced level student or professional pianist/accompanist. For example, the *staccati* must be performed delicately because they depict the soft fragile falling flakes of snow. Furthermore, each time the singers enter the accompaniment must be played very smoothly, with

correct phrasing, and in a slightly “rolling” fashion. Overly rhythmical playing (i.e. “pounding”) and ignorance of phrasing will result in a loss of the essence and nuance of “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening.”

The orchestral arrangement is for two clarinets, bassoon, glockenspiel, harp, and strings. The woodwind parts are for the most part sustained chords and could be easily performed by high school instrumentalists. Because young string players often experience difficulty with flat key signatures, the most difficult aspect about performing “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” will be the key. “Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening,” which is in the mode of *F aeolian*, may present a challenge to high school players.

Rehearsal Strategies

“Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” is a pleasure to rehearse and should not pose many problems for the conductor or singers. There are a few areas that might require extra attention including the meter changes, finding the first pitch, breathing and phrasing, accidentals, and *a cappella* singing.

The meter changes can be dealt with in much the same way as mentioned in “The Pasture.” The director should demonstrate the transition between the two meters by conducting and singing one of the parts or by instrumental parts being played alone. The choristers can clap or tap the constant eighth notes and can conduct themselves.

If some of the singers have difficulty finding their entering pitches, point out where the instrumentalists are sounding their pitch and lock onto that note by holding it as if it were a fermata. After a couple drills in this manner, the singers will feel secure and sing the first note with conviction. The following word, which moves into parts, may be practiced in the same manner.

Another area of concern is breathing and phrasing. The choral director will need to modify what Thompson has written in order to allow time for the singers to breathe. For example, the quarter notes on the word "know" in measure six will need to be changed to an eighth-note and an eighth-rest (ex. 100). The following words "though" and "here" need to be treated in the same manner. Adjustments should also be made at corresponding places in the next three verses.

Example 100. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 4 - 13.

The image shows a musical score for the poem "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" in three systems. Each system consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment line. The tempo is marked *mp*. The lyrics are: "Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the vil - lage though; He will not see me stop - ping here To watch his woods fill up with snow." Three boxes highlight specific phrasing adjustments: the first box is around the word "know" in the first system, the second box is around the word "though" in the second system, and the third box is around the word "here" in the third system. In each case, the original quarter note is replaced by an eighth note followed by an eighth rest.

Breathing and phrasing can be taught at the same time. The choral ensemble needs to be aware of the point at which each two-measure phrase segment crests. They also need to understand how each of these two-measure phrases are part of a larger four-measure phrase which in turn is part of the larger

eight-measure phrase of the entire verse (ex. 101).

Example 101. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" mm. 4 - 13.

mp

Whose woods these are I think I know. His

house is in the vil - lage though; He will not see me

stop - ping here To watch his woods fill up with snow.

The E-natural in measure eight is likely to be sung flat if care is not taken (see ex. 93). The second tenors should be aware that the E-natural is approached from an F above, a descending half-step, and that it is a very "small" interval. If the second tenors still experience difficulty, the conductor could demonstrate the part or have the accompanist play the passage alone. Turning the area of concern into a drill can be helpful. All the singers can sing their parts starting from measure seven with the director holding each chord until the singers become familiar with the chord in question. This should be done eventually without any assistance from the accompanist. Any sections that are not tuning properly can be worked on in this manner.

In measures fifty-five through sixty the pitch may sag where the ensemble sings *a cappella* (ex. 98). As mentioned above, all descending half-steps must be sung accurately and with unified vowels. The director may also want to instruct the ensemble to "brighten" the vowel sounds that occur on pitches that tend to sag--especially thirds. Choristers singing brightened vowels may need to be reminded to sing them softly. "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is an excellent choice for men's choral groups who have little experience in singing *a cappella* music but who need to learn this skill.

Summary

"Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" is yet another example of Randall Thompson's skill and craftsmanship at setting poetry in a beautifully enchanting way. The composition deservedly is a standard part of choral literature written for men. Not only does "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" have wide audience appeal, but the composition lends itself to the development of a beautiful choral tone.

Chapter Nine

Choose Something Like a Star

Oh Star (the fairest one in sight),
We grant your loftiness the right
To some obscurity of cloud --
It will not do to say of night,
Since dark is what brings out your light.
Some Mystery becomes the proud.
But to be wholly taciturn
In your reserve is not allowed.
Say something to us we can learn
By heart and when alone repeat.
Say something! And it says, 'I burn.'
But say with what degree of heat.
Talk Fahrenheit, talk Centigrade.
Use language we can comprehend.
Tell us what elements you blend.
It gives us strangely little aid,
But does tell something in the end.
And steadfast as Keats' Eremite
Not even stooping from its sphere,
It asks a little of us here.
It asks of us a certain height,
So when at times the mob is swayed
To carry praise or blame too far,
We may choose something like a star
To stay our minds on and be staid.

Robert Frost

Introduction

The title of this poem, "Choose Something Like a Star," reveals much of its intent. As mentioned before, stars have symbolic meaning for Frost. They are connected with ideals of truth, goodness and beauty. Fittingly, this monologue begins with the star seeker not just searching for any star but for the "fairest one in sight." There is evidence in other writings by Frost that he is referring to the star Sirius.⁵² The star gazer, "is willing to grant this 'fairest one in sight' its proper proud obscurity to the the mind of small, insignificant, and

⁵² Dorothy Hall, 127.

questioning man."⁵³ However, as much as man admires and is enchanted by the very mysteries of the star, he wants to fully understand it and is unable to. This quest for understanding is reflected by such demanding words as, "Say Something!" and "Use language we can comprehend." The star replies, "I burn." This statement reveals the elemental nature of the star plus much more. A star literally burns brightly for a very long time giving off heat and light. In order to burn the assumption is that the star is on fire. The choice of the word "burn" here brings to mind all the classic images that are associated with the word "fire" such as purification, alchemy, transformation, and being consumed. It also brings to mind such phrases as "burning with desire," "fired-up" and "on-fire" which describe people who are devoted to certain causes. These "fired-up" people are usually the ones who achieve greatness in life. They provide durable heat and light for others in a multitude of ways--scientific discovery, artistic achievement, new understanding of human nature, and revealing truth to name a few. They "light-up" the lives of others. In many societies this type of person is aptly referred to as a "star."

In the end very little can be grasped--"It gives us strangely little aid, But does tell something in the end." The star, as "steadfast as Keats' Eremite"⁵⁴ and without "stooping from its sphere," makes one "little" request--"a certain height." These words reveal the importance of the mind to continue to seek the noble "star" with upward gazing eyes. This significant message is delivered so that, "We may choose something like a star To stay our minds on and be staid."

The last piece of Thompson's *Frostiana*, "Choose Something Like a Star," is perhaps the most often performed composition of the seven songs. This is

⁵³ Elizabeth Isaacs, *An Introduction to Robert Frost* (Denver: Alan Swallow, 1962), 154.

⁵⁴ This is a reference to the poem "Bright Star" by John Keats in which the star is personified by being "nature's patient sleepless Eremite". See appendix two for the complete poem.

probably due to the expressive and dramatic qualities of "Choose Something Like a Star" along with its standard SATB voicings. As seen with the previous six songs, "Choose Something Like a Star" uses many word-painting techniques. Almost every aspect of the music can be related to the meaning of the words in the poem. Lupo has pointed out that Robert Frost in the poem has emphasized two fundamental qualities of a star as observed by human beings. These two characteristics are a star's height and steadfastness.⁵⁵ Thompson immediately captures these characteristics in his music within the first five opening measures of "Choose Something Like A Star." The quality of height is brought out by the stepwise ascending two-octave scale that begins on D in the accompaniment and by the upward octave leaps found in the soprano part. Steadfastness is depicted by both the G pedal found in the accompaniment and the sustained D in the soprano part (ex. 102). Another example of this type of text painting can be observed in measures twelve through sixteen and sixteen through twenty where Thompson has used harmonic alterations to change two similar phrases (exs. 103 & 104). He portrays the words "To some obscurity of cloud" by darkening the tonality which becomes suggestive of the words "night" and "dark." After several measures containing flatted E's and B's, Thompson cadences on a G major chord placed on the word "light" (ex. 105).

Dynamics, articulation marks, and dissonance are also used to paint the text. Examples of all three can be found in measures forty-one through forty-four where the poet is imploring the star to "Say something!" The use of dissonance can be located in measure forty-three on the word "burn" where he uses a major second between the sopranos and altos. Interestingly, the "height motive" is also present in the accompaniment here (ex. 106).

⁵⁵ Lupo, 54.

Example 102. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 1 - 5.

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system consists of four staves: three vocal staves (soprano, alto, and bass) and one piano accompaniment staff. The tempo is marked **Larghetto**. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C). The vocal lines begin with rests, followed by the lyrics "O Star, The The". The piano accompaniment starts with a **pp** dynamic and features a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the bass clef and chords in the treble clef. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, with a **p** dynamic marking and a crescendo leading to a **pp** dynamic. The lyrics "The" are repeated at the end of the system.

Example 103. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 12 - 16.

Star, O Star.
To some ob-scur-i-ty of cloud it
To some ob-scur-i-ty of cloud it
To some ob-scur-i-ty of cloud it

Example 104. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 16 - 20.

Star, O Star.
It will not do to say of night, Since
It will not do to say of night, Since
It will not do to say of night, Since

Example 105. "Choose something Like A Star" mm. 20 - 27.

Since dark is what brings out
Since dark is what brings out
Since dark is what brings out

Star
your light
your light.
your light.

p *dim.* *p* *dim.* *p* *dim.*

pp *pp* *pp* *pp*

pp *p*

Example 106. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 41 - 44.

The musical score for Example 106, measures 41-44, is presented in a five-staff format. The top four staves are vocal parts, and the bottom staff is the piano accompaniment. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "Say something! And it says, I burn. But". The piano part features a bass line with chords and dynamics including *f subito*, *sfz*, *cresc.*, and *sffz*. The vocal parts have dynamics like *f subito* and *cresc.* and use slurs to connect notes across phrases.

Continuing in measures forty-five through forty-nine a higher tessitura is used with relatively closer voice spacing to depict the intensity of the text (ex. 107). Two similar examples of text painting occur at measures sixty-two at the text "steadfast as Keats' eremite . . ." and at the end of the piece on the text "and be staid." At measure sixty-two the G - D open fifths that began "Choose Something Like a Star" return to musically show the steadfastness of Keats' eremite (ex. 108). At the end of the piece, at measures eighty-six through ninety-one, a unison D in all parts depicts the word "staid" which has also been augmented to two full measures. Notable is the "heighth motive" in the

accompaniment (ex. 109).

Example 107. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 45 - 49.

The musical score for Example 107, "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 45-49, is presented in five systems. The first four systems are vocal staves, each with the lyrics: "say with what de-gree of heat. Talk fah-ren-heit, talk Cen-ti-grade. Use". The fifth system is a piano accompaniment. The score includes various dynamics and performance markings.

System 1 (Vocal): Treble clef, C major, common time. Dynamics: *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*.

System 2 (Vocal): Treble clef, C major, common time. Dynamics: *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*.

System 3 (Vocal): Treble clef, C major, common time. Dynamics: *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*.

System 4 (Vocal): Bass clef, C major, common time. Dynamics: *ff*, *sfz*, *sfz*.

System 5 (Piano Accompaniment): Treble and Bass clefs, C major, common time. Dynamics: *sffz*, *ff*, *sfz sopra*, *sfz*.

Example 108. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 62 - 64.

Sostenuto e sereno
a tempo

stead - fast as Keats' Er - e - mite,
stead - fast as Keats' Er - e -
stead - fast as Keats' Er - e -
stead - fast as Keats' Er - e -

Sostenuto e sereno
a tempo

pp
dolcissimo

pp

Example 109. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 87 - 93.

pp

and be staid
and be staid
and be staid
and be staid

pp
pp
pp
pp

pp and be staid

mp *p* *pp*

Example 109 continued

Molto lento *ppp*

and *ppp*

and *ppp*

and *ppp*

and

dim.

and

Resources

Thompson composed "Choose Something Like a Star" for a four-part chorus of mixed voices with either piano or orchestral accompaniment. The ranges of the vocal parts are moderate, with the exception of the high tessitura of the tenor part at measures forty-five through fifty-three. The number of singers required will depend on the maturity and skill level of the vocalists and whether the composition will be performed with piano alone or with full orchestration. If the piano arrangement is used and the singers are secure and completely competent, as few as three on a part may be possible. However,

greater numbers of singers will be needed with the orchestral arrangement or when working with amateur singers. Numerous singers are advantageous in creating a "thick" sounding texture which is what Thompson probably intended.

Two flutes, two oboes, two Bb clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, trumpet, harp, and strings are included in the orchestral arrangement of "Choose Something Like a Star." All instrumental parts are accessible to average high school instrumentalists. With the exception of the contrabass part which does not divide, *divisi* string parts require at least three players to a part. These numbers are also necessary for balance considerations with the rest of the orchestra.

Analyses

"Choose Something Like A Star" is through-composed in the key of G. The text is divided into three sections, each with its own characteristics. All sections are introduced by the opening "height" motive which also concludes the piece. As seen previously, Thompson uses dovetailing to connect the endings and beginnings of major sections. Throughout "Choose Something Like A Star" the accompaniment acts in a supportive role for the vocalists.

Measures one through twenty-five constitute the first section. Its most notable characteristic is the preponderance of stepwise motion resulting in parallel chords. These chords, sung by the altos, tenors and basses, are enclosed by the G - D pedal notes in the accompaniment and the soprano line (ex. 110, also see exs. 103, 104, & 105). This is a favorite compositional device of Thompson. Another characteristic is the use of regular four-measure or eight-measure phrasing. Section one concludes with a cadence on a G major chord in measure twenty-five.

Example 110. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 65 - 67.

To reflect the text, section two increases rhythmic drive by using eighth notes and dotted quarter notes. Instead of parallel chords, Thompson's harmonic language here is the result of chromatic changes from chord to chord, sometimes in only one voice part (ex. 111). Although mostly conjunct motion is used, in measures forty-one through forty-nine disjunct motion increases to reflect the meaning of the text, "Say something! And it says, I burn. . ." (ex. 112). Unlike section one, the phrasing is irregular throughout the middle section and includes two-, three-, four- and six-measure phrases. Unlike section one which depicts a sense of peace and steadfastness, this section is demanding in its portrayal of agitation.

To conclude this section, four two-measure phrases in measures fifty through fifty-eight slowly bring down the pitch level with a cadence on D major.

Example 111. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 30 - 32.

The musical score for Example 111, "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 30-32, is presented in five systems. The first four systems are vocal staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. Each vocal line begins with the word "proud." followed by the lyrics: "But to be whol - ly tac - i - turn in your re - serve is not al -". The vocal lines are written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The fifth system is the piano accompaniment, consisting of a treble and bass clef. The right hand features ascending parallel chords, and the left hand has a steady eighth-note bass line. A fermata is placed over a unison D note in the final measure of the piano part.

The combination of ascending parallel chords and the use of a fermata on a unison D in measure sixty-one creates a very strong sense of release when the third section begins in G major. The use of close sixths in the alto and tenor parts, rhythms, regular phrasing and the pedal in the bass part and accompaniment all remind the listener of the opening section. Then beginning in measure seventy Thompson uses material that is similar to section two. The

climax of this work finally arrives in measure eighty on the important word "choose." In essence "We may **choose** something like a star to stay our minds on and be staid" or we may **choose** not to. Section one and two portray the two different choices that must be made. The third section is a final reminder with an appeal to "Choose Something Like A Star."

Example 112. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 41 - 44.

The musical score for "Choose Something Like A Star" (mm. 41-44) consists of four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: "Say something! And it says, I burn. But". The score includes dynamic markings such as *f subito*, *cresc.*, *sfz*, and *sfz cresc.*, along with phrasing slurs and accents. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef with the same key signature and time signature, featuring chords and rhythmic patterns in the left hand.

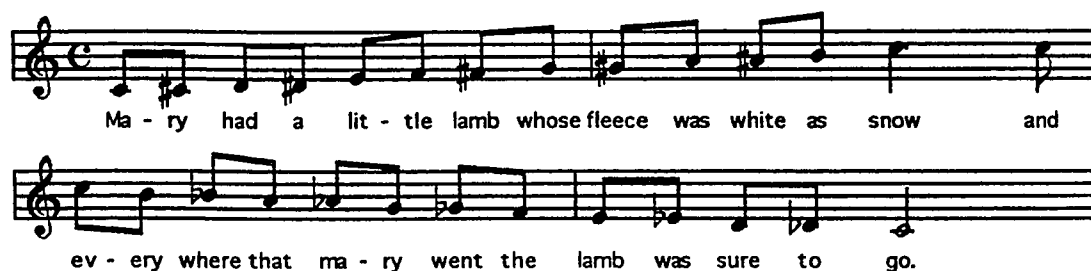
Rehearsal Strategies

"Choose Something Like A Star," although not overly difficult, does require careful rehearsal planning on the part of the conductor. The intonation of the many chromatic and enharmonic notes throughout "Choose

Something Like A Star," as well as dynamics and articulation marks will require some attention. Such details as precise cutoffs, breathing and phrasing are also important for a successful performance of this work.

Before rehearsing "Choose Something Like a Star" with the choir, the director would be wise to teach the singers to sing half and whole steps accurately. This can be accomplished by including exercises that incorporate these skills during warm-up time a week or two prior to the first rehearsals of "Choose Something Like A Star." Below are three examples of commonly used exercises that are helpful in promoting accurate intonation of major and minor seconds (exs. 113, 114 & 115).

Example 113.



Ma - ry had a lit - tle lamb whose fleece was white as snow and
ev - ery where that ma - ry went the lamb was sure to go.

Example 114.



She sells sea shells by the shore She can't sell them a - ny more.

Example 115.



The first place apt to be sung with incorrect intonation is the ascending octave leaps in the opening soprano part. (exs. 103, 104 & 105) The tendency will be for the d2 to be sung flat. The conductor can include exercises incorporating octave leaps during warm-ups. Following is one commonly used exercise for ascending octave leaps. The words "Oh Star" may be substituted so that the singers can practice forming the correct vowel and producing the "ah" sound that the conductor wants (ex. 116).

Example 116.

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef with a common time signature. The first staff contains the lyrics "I know I know I know I Know O" and the second staff contains "Star O Star O Star O Star O". The music consists of eighth and quarter notes with ascending and descending intervals.

Because of the similarity of measures twelve through fifteen to measures sixteen to nineteen problems may occur. The two phrases look very much the same. However there are chromatic alterations found in measures sixteen to nineteen (exs. 117 & 118). The director will not only probably need to point out the differences to the choristers, but will also need to practice each line (alto, tenor, bass) separately until each one is sung accurately in tune. This is best practiced away from the piano and after the singers have marked the half-steps and whole-steps in their scores. After each individual line is sung correctly, the singers will benefit from hearing and singing their part against various other parts. After these three parts can sing with precise intonation the soprano part can be added or the sopranos can sing their part softly during the entire exercise.

Example 117. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 12 - 16.

Star, O Star,
 To some ob-scur-i-ty of cloud It
 To some ob-scur-i-ty of cloud It
 To some ob-scur-i-ty of cloud It

Example 118. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 16 - 20.

Star, O Star,
 It will not do to say of night, Since
 It will not do to say of night, Since
 It will not do to say of night, Since

Another place where intonation may suffer can be located in measures thirty through thirty-two where the basses must sing repeated pitches against the descending tenor line and the sopranos must do likewise with the alto line (ex. 119). Chord changes involving the use of chromatics can be practiced by augmenting each note value until the choir can hear and feel when the chord has "locked" into place. Once the ensemble can accurately sing chord changes with excellent intonation slowly, the tempo can be accelerated.

Example 119. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 30 - 32.

The musical score for Example 119 is presented in five systems. The first four systems are vocal staves for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, respectively. The fifth system is a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "proud. But to be whol - ly tac - i - turn in your re - serve is not al -". The piano part features a descending bass line and chords that change chromatically.

Finally, many singers will not sing enharmonic notes correctly because they will not recognize the pitches as being identical. The propensity will be

towards singing the notes as they appear in the score. Notes that look higher in pitch will be sung higher and vice versa. The solution is to explain enharmonics and point out which pitches sound the same though written differently. In "Choose Something Like A Star" this occurs in measures thirty-three and thirty-four (ex.120).

Example 120 . "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 33 - 34.

A challenge is also offered by dynamic changes and a variety of articulations. Thompson has artistically used markings which range from *pianissimo* to *fortissimo* and also uses *crescendi* and *decrescendi*. Articulations employed include *tenuti*, accents, *staccati*, *marcati*, and *sforzandi*.

As with chromatic note problems, the wise director will prepare the group for success by choosing warm-ups that develop the ability to make dynamic differences not only between *piano* and *forte* but between *piano* and *pianissimo* or *forte* and *fortissimo*. Articulations can also be practiced and mastered during the warm-up period. The creative director can modify exercises already in use by the choir or improvise and develop new ones. For example, the above exercises could be modified to develop dynamic and articulation skills (ex. 121).

Example 121.

Musical notation for Example 121, showing a vocal line with dynamic markings and lyrics. The notation is on a single staff in C major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "She sells sea shells by the shore She can't sell them a - ny more." The first phrase "She sells sea shells by the shore" is marked *f* (forte) and the second phrase "She can't sell them a - ny more." is marked *p* (piano) and *f* (forte). There are slurs over each phrase.

Other vital details are cutoffs, breathing, and phrasing. Basically two types of cutoffs are used in "Choose Something Like A Star." One kind of cutoff is that which falls on a rest following the note that is being sung. The second type falls on a tied eighth note with a *staccato*. In both cases the release occurs on the downbeat (exs. 122 and 123).

Example 122. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 5 - 8.

Musical notation for Example 122, showing a vocal line with dynamic markings and lyrics. The notation is on a single staff in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "The fair - est one in sight, We". The first phrase "The fair - est one in sight," is marked *pp* (pianissimo). There is a rest on the downbeat of the second measure.

Example 123. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 57 - 60.

Musical notation for Example 123, showing a vocal line with dynamic markings and lyrics. The notation is on a single staff in G major, 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "something in the end." The first phrase "something in the end." is marked *p a tempo* (piano, at tempo). The second phrase "something in the end." is marked *poco rall.* (poco rallentando). There is a slur over the second phrase.

In general, breaths only occur on the rest that precedes a new phrase.

Some of the longer phrases may require staggered breathing such as in measures twenty through twenty-seven. Group breathing after the word "dark" and "out" is best avoided to maintain the *crescendo* of the phrase (ex. 105). Also the director must instruct the choir to breathe after the word "proud" in measure thirty. The first half of the third beat of measure thirty would be changed from an eighth-note into a sixteenth-note and a sixteenth-rest (ex. 124).

Example 124. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 28 - 30.

Some mys - ter - y be - comes the proud. But to be

Some mys - ter - y be - comes the proud But to be

Another place that may need to be modified can be found in measure sixty-five on the syllable "-mite." Instead of the existing half-note, a quarter-note and rest can be used (ex. 125).

Example 125. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 61 - 65.

pp *a tempo*
And stead - fast as Keats' Er - e mite, Not

pp *a tempo*
And stead - fast as Keats' Er - e mite, Not

The director will need to make similar decisions about measure seventy-one concerning the word "here" and also in measure seventy-six and seventy-eight on the words "sway'd" and "far" respectively (exs. 126 & 127; 128 & 129; 130 & 131).

Example 126. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 69 - 71 unmodified.

Example 126 shows the unmodified musical score for measures 69-71. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). It features four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are: "It asks a lit-tle of us here. It". A box highlights the end of the phrase "here." in measure 71 for all parts.

Example 127. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 69 - 71 modified.

Example 127 shows the modified musical score for measures 69-71. The score is in G major (one sharp) and common time (C). It features four vocal parts: Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass. The lyrics are: "It asks a lit-tle of us here. It". A box highlights the end of the phrase "here." in measure 71. In this modified version, the Soprano and Alto parts have a fermata over the final note of "here." in measure 71.

Example 128. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 74 - 76 unmodified.

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

Example 129. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 74 - 76 modified.

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

mp cresc.
So when at times the mob is sway'd To

Example 130. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm 77 - 79 unmodified

car - ry praise of blame too far, We may
 car - ry praise or blame too far, We may
 car - ry praise or blame too far, We may
 car - ry praise or me too far We may

Example 131. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 77 - 79 modified.

car - ry praise of blame too far, We may
 car - ry praise or blame too far, We may
 car - ry praise or blame too far, We may
 car - ry praise or me too far We may

In contrast, the choir should not breath between the words "choose" and

"something" in measures eighty and eighty-one because it destroys the line (ex. 132). Lastly, there are two *fermati* found in "Choose Something Like A Star" in measures sixty-one and eighty-eight after which some singers may be tempted to take a breath. This is best avoided as the intended effect is lost if a breath is taken. Staggered breathing may be used if necessary (ex.133).

Example 132. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 79 - 82.

f *ff* *mp*

We may choose something like a star

Example 133. "Choose Something Like A Star" mm. 61 - 65.

pp *a tempo*

And stead - fast as Keats' Er - e - mite, Not

Summary

"Choose Something Like A Star" is truly an inspiring work of art appealing to both performers and audiences. Thompson has achieved a perfect union between the text and music creating another important contribution to the body of choral literature. This work is one of the finest compositions available and is accessible for high school aged mixed choral groups.

Chapter Ten

Unity

In *Frostiana*, Thompson has created a unified set of choral works by connecting various elements of structure and design. These include both musical and textual aspects of the seven individual pieces. Some unifying components are large and obvious, others are more subtle.

One way Thompson has united *Frostiana* is by the arrangement of the individual pieces by voicing (ex. 134).

Example 134

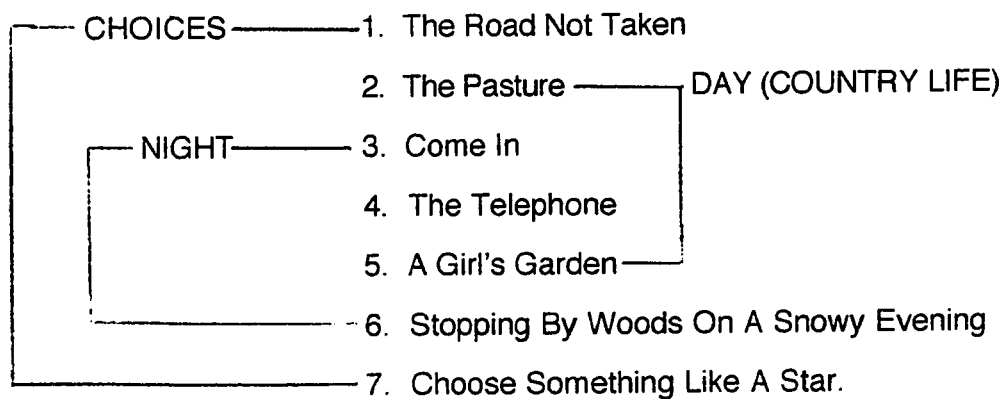


This symmetrical structure gives *Frostiana* an overall coherence and yet provides variety by use of different vocal timbres. It also expedited the logistics of a joint concert by Radcliffe women and Harvard men, as mentioned in chapter two.

The text of the individual pieces also creates an integral whole. In addition to each song belonging to the general theme of "Seven Country

Songs,” Thompson has paired six of the pieces with each other with regards to the intent of the poetry. “The Road Not Taken” and “Choose Something Like A Star” both depict the importance of choices. “The Pasture” and “A Girl’s Garden” both describe country or village life in action during daylight hours. These two compositions also portray the more civilized or human aspects of rural life. In contrast, “Come In” and “Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening” take place at dusk and evening near heavily wooded areas that are uncivilized and have a life of their own (ex. 135).

Example 135



Furthermore, the *tempi* of the seven pieces are arranged so that *Frostiana* as a whole follows the tempo arrangement of “slow, fast, slow” (ex. 136). The first three songs, “The Road Not Taken,” “The Pasture,” and “Come In” are slow or moderately slow. “The Telephone” and “A Girl’s Garden” are fast. “Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening” and “Choose Something Like a Star” return to the slower tempos heard at the beginning of the set.

In addition to tempo, the meters used in *Frostiana* alternate between strict

common time and a mixed combination of common, triple and duple meters. For example, "The Road Not Taken" is in common time but the following piece, "The Pasture," uses the time signatures of 6/8 and 4/4. The third piece, "Come In," returns to common time. This pattern is used throughout *Frostiana* (ex. 136). A notable observation about *Frostiana* is that "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" and "The Pasture" share reverse metrical schemes. As mentioned above, the instrumental interludes in "The Pasture" are in 6/8 time signature in contrast to the interludes of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" which are in 4/4. Interestingly, the verses of "The Pasture" are in 4/4 while the text of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" are in 6/8.

Example 136

<u>TEMPO</u>		<u>METER</u>
	1. The Road Not Taken	4/4
SLOW	2. The Pasture	6/8 & 4/4
	3. Come In	4/4
FAST	4. The Telephone	4/4, 3/4, 2/4
	5. A Girl's Garden	4/4
SLOW	6. Stopping By Woods . . .	4/4 & 6/8
	7. Choose Something Like A Star.	4/4

Thompson has also linked the songs together so that the transitions between pieces are smooth. For example, "The Road Not Taken" which ends on a D minor chord is followed by "The Pasture" in the relative key of F. "The Pasture" which closes on a F major chord brings us to the opening of "Come In"

in which the first two notes heard are open fifths F - C even though the composition is written in G minor. Likewise, "A Girl's Garden" which begins on a D minor chord and is in the key of D is preceded by its dominant, an A major chord in "The Telephone." Although this "linking" of the pieces is subtle and often not obvious, it creates a logical sense of moving from one piece to the next.

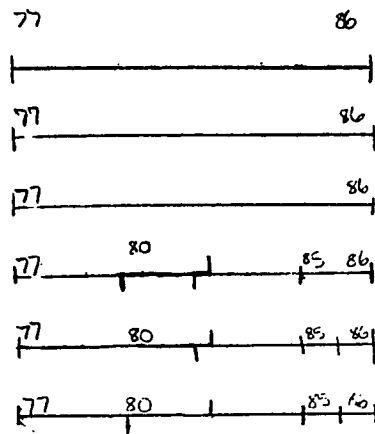
Lastly, the use of similar compositional devices throughout the seven individual compositions of *Frostiana* creates unity. As mentioned previously, some of these techniques include inverted chords in parallel motion sometimes against a stepwise bass in contrary motion or a bass "pedal," the use of modes and pentatonic scales, increasingly thicker texture towards the end of important sections or the end of the piece, *a cappella* singing and/or augmentation to highlight especially significant text, dovetailing, and judicious use of rests.

Thompson's choice of compositional devices, voicings, text pairings, tempi, keys, and meters are not unintentional but rather part of his overall design to provide unity for the entire set of individual pieces. Clearly *Frostiana* was conceived as a unified whole like any other major work of art. Thompson's ability to successfully unify seven unique and individual pieces is partly what elevates *Frostiana* to a lasting masterwork.

However, the seemingly perfect union between the text and the music is what really gives *Frostiana* the quality of transcending beyond that which is ordinary. Although not clearly documented, Thompson may have not only been commissioned to write a work for the two-hundredth anniversary of the incorporation of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts--he may have been instructed to compose a work using the poems of Robert Frost. Frost was not

only a professor of English and poet-in-residence at Amherst College during the years 1916-1920 and 1923-1925, but he also had a special affinity for New England and its landscape and people. His poems used the natural speech of New England's vernacular and vividly reproduced the people and scenery. The Robert Frost Library, dedicated in 1963 by President John F. Kennedy, stands in Amherst, Massachusetts. Regardless of where the idea of setting Frost's poems to music originated, it was an excellent and logical choice for the occasion. Thompson clearly understood Frost's poems that were ultimately selected for inclusion in *Frostiana*. His sublime musical settings of Frost's wonderful poems are truly both inspired and inspirational.

The Road Not Taken



P PP < n.p > PP PP nP

G C Gm A7 Dm

and that
has made
all the
difference

The Pasture

Instrument	Voice	Instrument	Voice	Instrument
	1-49			
	18 19		36 37	
	9 10	18 19	36 37	
	9 10	17 19	36 37	
4 5	9 10	13 14	37	40 41
4 5	9 10	15 16	32 33	41

pp	pp	mf	pp	pp	mf	pp	pp
$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$	$\frac{4}{4}$
$\bullet = \bullet$							

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring
 And wait for you to come along
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring
 And wait for you to come along
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring
 And wait for you to come along
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long

I'm going out to clean the pasture spring
 And wait for you to come along
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long
 When you start to sing long
 I'll be there with a long

Come In

42

28 29

33 34

36 39

42

interlude 5 6

10 11

14 15

interlude 20

26 29

interlude 33 34

42

5 6

14 15

20 21

26 29

32 33

36 39

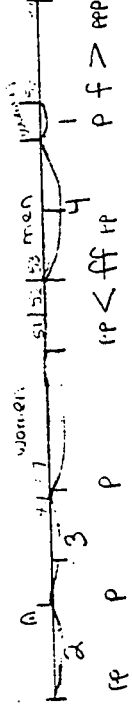
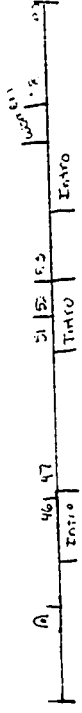
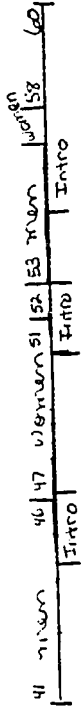
42

As I came through now if it side
to the edge music it was it was
of the edge park dig it charn.
woods outside

Too dark by To better though
in the slight its perch it still
for a wing night could sing
bird

The of the That Still
light of the in the livd thrush's
sun. west. one breast.
song one
more

The Telephone



pp p p pp < ff ff p f > pp
 Ap F misspelled EAEDA C# A >

Someone I heard I may have
 said it as I thought as
 "Conell board" "I'm not
 sure, so I Mm
 same."

A Girl's Garden

1 35

1 12 13 24 25 35

1 4 5 12 13 16 17 24 25 28 29 35

Introduction Interlude Interlude

1 4 5 8 9 12 13 16 17 20 21 24 25 28 29 32 33 35

1 4 5 8 9 12 13 16 17 20 21 24 25 28 29 32 33 35

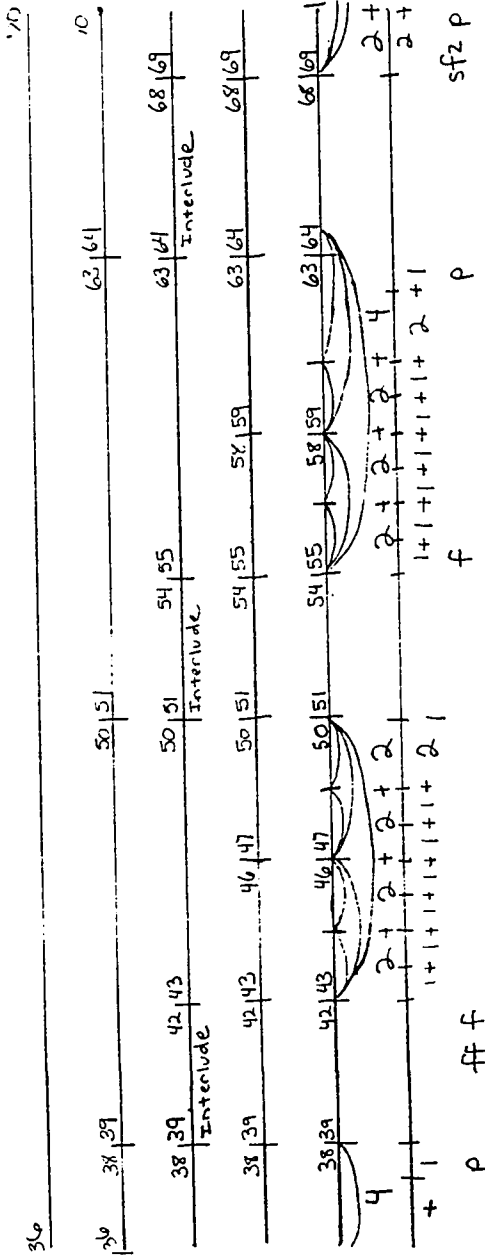
fp f mf

Likes to tell how one spring
 when she was a girl on a farm
 she did a childlike thing
 One day she said her father
 To give her a garden plot
 To plant and tend & reap herself
 And he said why not?

In casting about for a corner
 he sought out an idle bit
 Of wall off ground where a shop
 had stood. And he said 'Just it'
 And he said that ought to serve you
 An ideal one girl form
 And give you a chance to put some
 strength in your slim Jim arm.

It was not enough of a garden
 Her father said to plough
 So she had to work it all by hand
 But she don't mind now.
 She wheeled the dung in the wheel-
 barrow along a stretch of road.
 But she always ran away & left

A Girl's Garden



Her not nice load,

And hid from anyone passing
 And then she beg'd the seed.
 She says she thinks she planted one
 Of all things but weed,
 A hill each of potatoes
 Radishes, lettuce, peas
 Tomatoes, beets, beans, pumpkins, corn
 And even fruit trees.

And yes, she has long mistrusted
 That a cider apple tree
 In bearing there today is hers,
 Or at least may be.
 Her crop was a miscellany
 When all was said and done
 A little bit of ev'ry thing -
 A great deal of none

now

A Girl's Garden



1+1+3 2 2+1+1+1+1



ff P PP P PP P

When she sees in the village

How village things go

Just when it seems to come in night

She says, 'I know!

It's as when I was a farmer

Oh never by way of advice

And she never sins by telling the

To the same person twice,

Stopping By Woods On A Snowy Evening

40

The musical score consists of five staves. The first staff is a blank line. The second staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). It contains notes for measures 12, 14, 16, 17, 24, 25, 30, 31, 33, 34, 35, 38, 39, and 40. The notes are: 12 (F4), 14 (F4), 16 (F4), 17 (F4), 24 (F4), 25 (F4), 30 (F4), 31 (F4), 33 (F4), 34 (F4), 35 (F4), 38 (F4), 39 (F4), 40 (F4). There are some slurs and dynamics markings like 'pp' and 'mf'.

mf pp P Pp mf pp pp mf pp pp pp

$\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{4}{4}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{6}{8}$ $\frac{4}{4}$

$\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ in two

Fm A^b Fm - Fm - C7 Fm B^b D^b Fm A^b Fm ... Bm Fm C7 Fm B^b D^b Fm A^b E^b Fm - Bm Fm C7 Fm B^b D^b Bm F A^bm

Whose house
woods are I
know these
are I know
the village
is in the
I know
these woods
are I know
the village
is in the
I know

He will
not
be
staying
here
with
snow

To watch
his
woods
fill up
with
snow

little
horse
I
think
it
is
near

To stop
without
a
house
near

Between
the
woods
and
frozen
lake

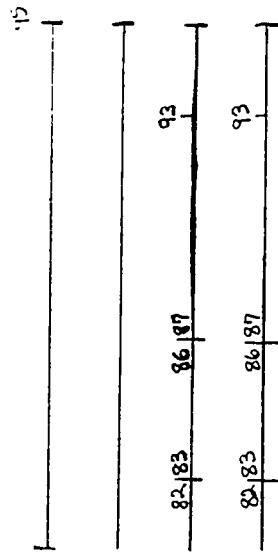
The
darkest
evening
of
the
year

He
gives
his
harness
bells
a
shake

To ask
if
there
is
some
mistake

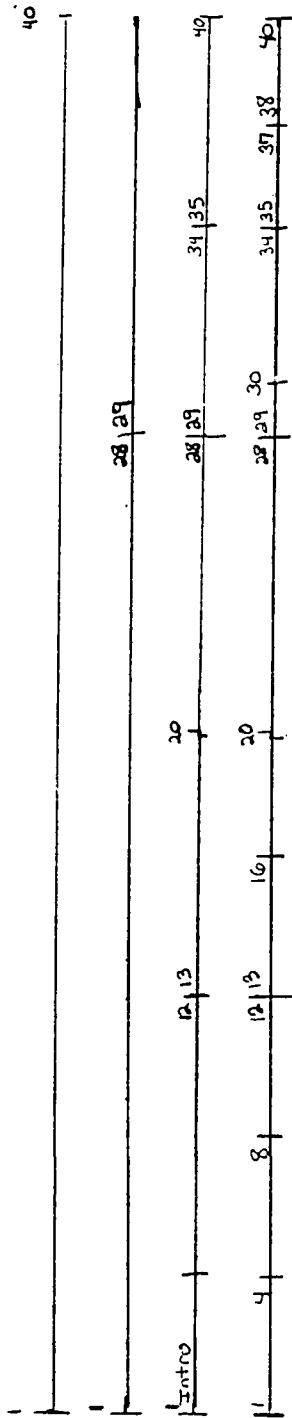
The
only
sawd
and
the
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Choose Something Like A Star



$\gt_{mp} p \gt_{lf}$ ppp
 To stay And be staid And
 our be
 minds on staid.

Choose Something Like A Star



PP	FP	FP	FP	FP	FP	FP	P	mf	P
O Star the fairest one in sight	O Star We grant your loftness the night.	O Star To some obscure of cloud	O Star It will not do to say of night.	O Star Since dark is what brings out your light.	O Star light. O Star night.	Some mystery becomes the proud, but to be wholly taciturn in your reserve	Say Something to us we can learn By heart	And when alone repeat. is not allow'd	

Bright Star
by
John Keats

Bright star, would I were steadfast as thou art
Not in lone splendor hung aloft the night,
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,
Or gazing on the new soft fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors:
No--yet still steadfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest;
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever--or else swoon to death.

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